



NORTHWEST ASSOCIATED CONSULTANTS, INC.

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MEMORANDUM

9/1/15 CC Mtg.
**Agenda
Item
6b**

TO: Sunfish Lake Mayor and City Council

FROM: Michelle Barness

DATE: August 26, 2015

RE: Sunfish Lake – 295 Salem Church Road – Driveway Screening Plan

FILE: 211.02

BACKGROUND

At the August 4, 2015 meeting the City Council considered a landscape plan from Virginia Coss for new screening plantings along the driveway easement to her property located at 295 Salem Church Road. City Forester Jim Naves had visited the site with Mrs. Coss on July 21, 2015 and recommended three new screening trees be installed adjacent to the driveway easement. The plan Mrs. Coss submitted for Council approval at the August meeting identified the general location of these new plantings over an existing landscape plan approved back in 1999 (with the approval of the site and building plans for the Coss residence). The Council tabled consideration of the landscape plan for consideration at the September 1, 2015 meeting until a more detailed landscape plan could be provided. The Council requested that the new plan illustrate all existing screening vegetation along the driveway easement, as well as specify the locations of the proposed screening trees. This level of detail was found necessary in order to understand exactly where screening is proposed and how this will impact adjacent properties, and in order to provide a clear record of what screening trees Virginia Coss will be responsible for maintaining along the driveway easement in the future.

City Forester Jim Naves re-visited the driveway easement to the Coss property on August 21, 2015 and created the alternative landscape / screening plan requested by the City Council. The alternative landscape plan is provided with this memorandum (Exhibit C), along with the foresters explanation of what screening exists along the driveway easement currently and where new plantings may be appropriate (Exhibit B). Of note is the existence of mature spruce, fir and oak trees along the driveway easement, in addition to expansive areas of natural shrub understory, and areas where new landscape shrubs have been installed. His final recommendation for screening plantings remains the same. He has suggested three new trees be installed as shown on the submitted plan, and according to planting and care instructions originating from his original visit to the site and described in the email memorandum dated July 24, 2015 (Exhibit A).

City Council also directed planning staff to send the new screening plan to adjacent neighbors to receive their input and to further notify all affected property owners that the plan would be reviewed at the September meeting so that they may attend. Planning staff notified the owner of 273 Salem Church Rd. of the landscape plan and upcoming meeting. Mr. Brackey of 273 Salem Church Rd. is the fee owner of the land upon which the driveway easement and proposed plantings sit, and as such his feedback on the proposed installation should be gathered prior to the City making a final decision on the project. Mr. Brackey has not yet provided comment, however any comment provided up to the date of the September Council meeting will be discussed in review of the proposed screening plan.

In addition, the owners of 315 Salem Church Rd. were notified of the screening plan and invited to attend the September Council meeting. The Lees of 315 Salem Church Rd. reviewed the plan and contacted the City to express their concern that the three proposed trees may not be sufficient to screen the driveway easement. Part of this concern stems from the fact that areas of shrub cover on the Lees property currently provide screening of the Coss driveway easement. They would prefer that screening of the driveway easement not be reliant on vegetation growing on their property, as they would like to remove portions of this shrub cover in the future. The submitted landscape plan shows there is fairly continuous vegetation from Salem Church Road to the Coss property immediately adjacent to the west edge of the driveway easement, and off of the Lee property. However, it may be that this screening vegetation is supplemented by natural vegetation on the nearby Lee property. Still, given the overall density of plantings surrounding the driveway easement in its current state today, the City Forester does not believe there are more than three areas where new screening trees would be beneficial. If screening conditions on adjacent properties were different, it is possible that this recommendation would change.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff has prepared a draft resolution for approval of the alternative landscape / screening plan for consideration by Council. The resolution provides background on the history of the driveway screening requirement, explains the process by which the City has requested and reviewed an updated screening plan for the driveway easement, and provides a description of the City Forester's screening recommendations. Planning staff requests the City review the newly submitted landscape / screening plan and the draft council resolution, and make a motion on the screening plan request. The City should weigh the intent of the original screening requirement, the recommendations of City staff, and the feedback received from adjacent neighbors in making a decision on the approval of the landscape / screening plan.

cc: Catherine Iago, City Clerk
Tim Kuntz, City Attorney
Don Sterna and Eric Eckman, City Engineers
Mike Andrejka, Building Official
Jim Naves, City Forester
Ron Wasmund, Septic System Inspector

Michelle Barness

From: lstreecare@gmail.com on behalf of Jim Naves [jim@lstreecare.com]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 9:50 AM
To: Michelle Barness
Subject: Coss tree planting near driveway

Hi Michelle,

When I met with Virginia Coss to discuss the possibilities for additional evergreen trees along the west side of her driveway easement we had a positive meeting that brought a few new details to light.

1. The landscape drawing showing where trees were planned to be installed was prepared by a company the the Cosses have not worked with.
2. The landscape drawing does not show any evergreen trees south of the swale (waterway).
3. Significant vegetation would need to be removed to plant any new trees successfully south of the waterway.
4. There is a line of deciduous shrubs planted just to the east of the split rail fence. (probably in the last 2-3 years) These shrubs were installed by Coss and seem appropriate species and appear well established though growing slowly in the shady conditions.

Virginia and I noted three open spaces where new evergreen trees would fit and I recommended using Canadian hemlock since that is a tree suitable for the shady conditions and less desirable as deer food. I recommended installing 4' evergreens since smaller trees acclimate to their new sites more quickly. The new trees will require extra watering and shredded wood mulch to help hold soil moisture. The mulch will also help with weeds while the new trees are getting established. The sooner the new trees are installed the better so they get settled in before winter.

Jim

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Jim Naves
jim@lstreecare.com
612-803-9033

Living Sculpture, Tree and Shrub Care, Inc
www.lstreecare.com

Michelle Barness

From: lstreecare@gmail.com on behalf of Jim Naves [jim@lstreecare.com]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2015 10:36 AM
To: Michelle Barness
Subject: Re: Sunfish Lake - Coss Survey w Trees Identified

Hi Michelle,

Visited the Coss driveway and noted position of existing trees and three open planting sites on the map. I am sending you the original with my marks and notes for your files.

I do not recommend removing living evergreen trees to allow planting new smaller evergreens because the existing balsam firs look about as good as can be expected when planted under mature oaks. By the time new trees became well established they would most likely look like the current trees. There are three planting sites noted on the map with blue circles. A recent attempt at creating a hedge of viburnums and lilacs near the split rail fence has been somewhat successful in that most shrubs are surviving and filling in the spaces. Once again, given the dominant oak overstory these shrubs are growing normally.

In this situation a heavy understory of buckthorn, honeysuckle, amur maple and other smaller stature trees/shrubs helps to provide screening between properties. Therefore I do not recommend removing the understory to make space to plant evergreens under a canopy of mature oaks.

Jim

On Thu, Aug 20, 2015 at 3:38 PM, Michelle Barness <mbarness@nacplanning.com> wrote:

Hi Jim,

As we discussed, attached is the 1999 survey of the 273 Salem Church Rd. and 295 Salem Church Rd. properties, including the driveway easement area, with trees in existence at that time identified. It should serve as a good landscape plan base. I really appreciate your help. Would you mind sending me and Virginia a copy of the plan you come up with before next Wednesday? Then I can include it with the planning materials to the Council. I don't think the plan has to be fancy, just clear to read, and accurate as we can be with regards to what is growing along the west side of the driveway now and what is proposed.

Thanks again,

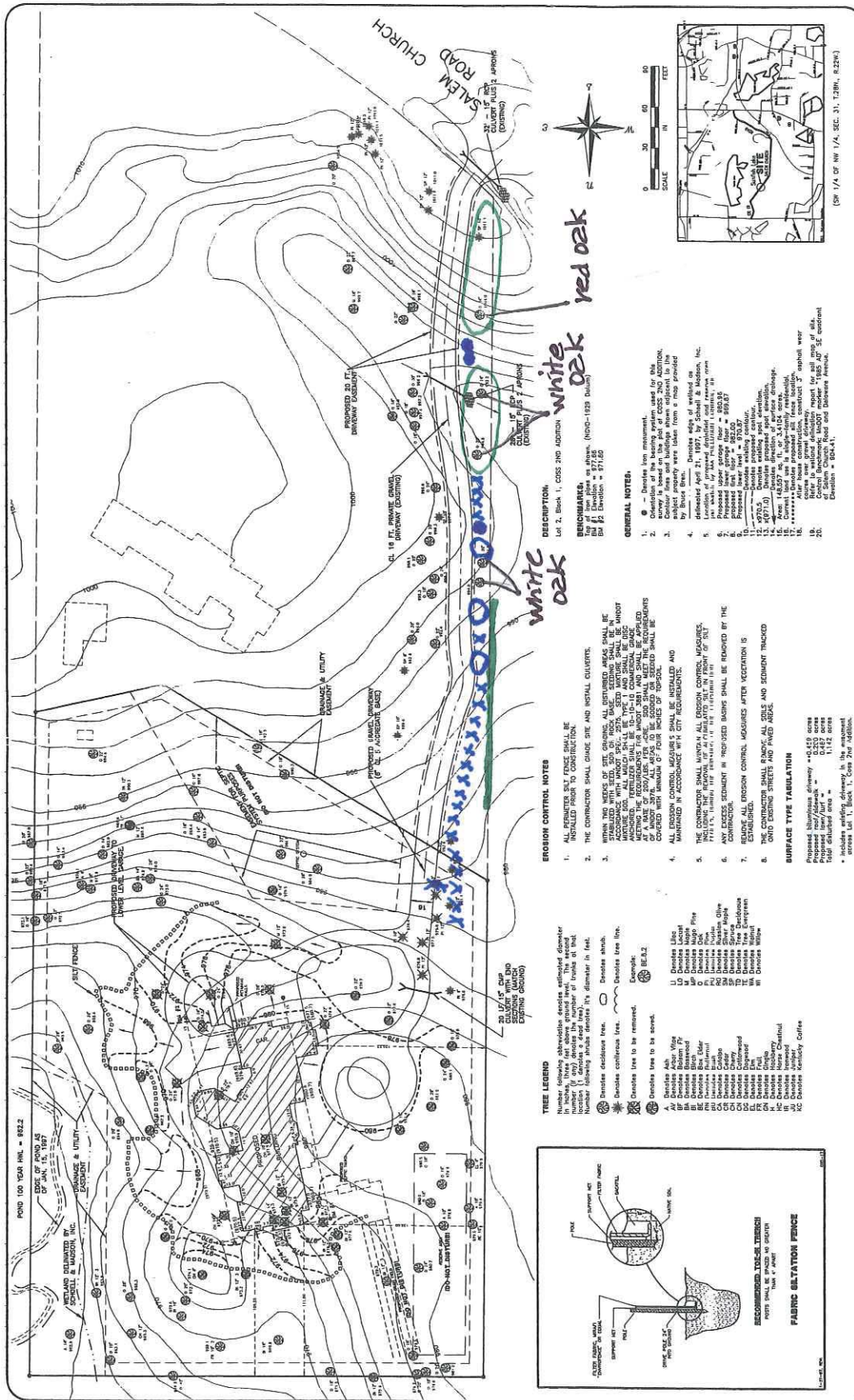
Michelle

Michelle Barness, Sunfish Lake City Planner

Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc.

8-21-15

Living Sculpture Tree & Shrub Care, Inc.
5900 Zehnder Road
Sunfish Lake, MN 55077



DATE: _____ BY: _____

REVISIONS: _____

PROJECT NAME/SHEET TITLE
COSS ADDITION
SUNFISH LAKE, MN
GRADING & DRAINAGE & EROSION CONTROL PLAN

OWNER/DEVELOPER
BRUCE BREN HOMES
106 SOUTH BROADWAY
WAYZATA, MINNESOTA 55391
612 478-0818

DATE: MAY 18, 1999

S.M.I. PROJECT NO. 60834-067 SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEET

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S.M.I. PROJECT NO. 60834-067 SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEET

**CITY OF SUNFISH LAKE
DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION APPROVING A LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR SCREENING PLANTINGS
ALONG THE PRIVATE DRIVEWAY EASEMENT TO 295 SALEM CHURCH ROAD,
DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA.**

WHEREAS, on September 22, 1998 the Sunfish Lake City Council approved Coss 2nd Addition with the condition that a landscape plan be submitted following the installation of the driveway to 295 Salem Church Road (Lot 2, Block 1 Coss 2nd Addition, Dakota County, Minnesota), for areas adjacent to 315 Salem Church Road to show the manner in which screening will be accomplished (intended to enhance the natural vegetation to remain along the driveway easement); and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 1999 the Sunfish Lake City Council approved the construction of the Coss residence at 295 Salem Church Road, including a submitted landscape plan by Dean Bailey Associates, Inc. dated April 26, 1999 showing Austrian pines 8 - 10 feet in size, planted 12 feet from each other as permitted given existing trees along the driveway easement, and continuing on the west side of the driveway from the north end thereof to the public street (Salem Church Road); and

WHEREAS, a portion of the screening plantings implemented with the Coss residence approval have failed over time, and according to Zoning Ordinance Section 1218.02 in those cases where landscaping is required as part of City approvals, any plant material which is diseased or dies shall be replaced with like kind of the original size; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2015 City staff forwarded Virginia Coss a letter requesting that she submit a new landscape plan for replacement screening trees along the west edge of the driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road, for review and approval by the City Planner, City Forester, and Sunfish Lake City Council; and

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2015 Virginia Coss met with Sunfish Lake City Forester Jim Naves to walk the extent of the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road to identify opportunities for new screening plantings; and

WHEREAS, upon visiting the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road the City Forester made the following recommendations for new screening plantings along the west side of the driveway easement:

- 1) There are three open spaces along the driveway easement where new evergreen trees for screening purposes could fit.
- 2) Canadian Hemlock trees should be planted in the available spaces, as this tree is suitable in shady conditions and is less desirable as deer food.
- 3) The new screening trees should be four feet or less in height when installed since smaller trees acclimate to their new sites more quickly.
- 4) The new trees require extra watering and shredded wood mulch to help hold soil moisture and to help with weeds while the trees are getting established.
- 5) The new trees should be installed as soon as possible in the summer / fall of 2015 so they are settled in time for winter.

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2015 Virginia Coss submitted a landscape plan for new screening plantings along the private driveway easement to her property located at 295 Salem Church Road which illustrated the general location of new plantings over the original approved landscape plan from 1999; and

WHEREAS, City planning staff reviewed the updated landscape plan and summarized what new screening plantings were being proposed by the plan in the July 29, 2015 planning report to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Sunfish Lake City Council considered the landscape plan for new screening plantings submitted by Virginia Coss at the August 4, 2015 City Council meeting, and tabled consideration of the plan until Mrs. Coss could submit a more detailed landscape plan illustrating all existing screening plantings along the driveway easement and the specific locations of new screening plantings being proposed; and

WHEREAS, on behalf of Virginia Coss, on August 21, 2015 Sunfish Lake City Forester Jim Naves re-visited the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road and created the alternative landscape and screening plan requested by the City Council, illustrating existing screening and proposed screening plantings along the edge of the driveway easement; and

WHEREAS, after his visit to the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road on August 21, 2015 the City Forester provided the following findings with regards to new screening plantings along the driveway easement:

- 1) There are three proposed screening tree planting sites shown on the submitted landscape plan.

- 2) Other existing screening vegetation along the driveway easement provides screening in addition to the proposed trees, including a heavy understory of buckthorn, honeysuckle, amur maple, and other smaller stature trees/shrubs, existing spruce, fir and oak trees, and recent plantings of viburnums and lilac shrubs.
- 3) He does not recommend removing living evergreen trees to allow planting new smaller evergreens because the existing balsam firs shown on the submitted landscape plan are as good as can be expected planted under mature oak trees.

WHEREAS, City staff forwarded the alternative landscape plan for new screening plantings along the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road to adjacent property owners at 315 Salem Church Road and 273 Salem Church Road for consideration and comment prior to consideration of the plan at the September 1, 2015 City Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the alternative landscape plan and screening recommendations from the City Forester were provided to the City Council with a planning memorandum dated August 26, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Sunfish Lake City Council considered the alternative landscape plan and screening recommendations from the City Forester and any feedback provided from adjacent neighbors at the September 1, 2015 meeting; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council of the City of Sunfish Lake hereby approves the alternative landscape plan submitted on behalf of Virginia Coss by the City Forester, illustrating the location of three new screening trees along the west edge of the private driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road, contingent on the following conditions:

- 1) The screening plantings meet the approval of the owner of the property located at 273 Salem Church Road, who is the fee owner of the land upon which the new screening plantings will sit adjacent to the driveway easement to 295 Salem Church Road.
- 2) The new screening plantings meet the City Forester's recommendations as detailed in the email memorandum dated July 24, 2015 (see attached Exhibit A) and August 21, 2015 (see attached Exhibit B), and are located along the driveway easement as shown on the landscape plan dated August 21, 2015 (see attached Exhibit C).

The alternative landscape plan hereby approved replaces the landscape plan previously approved June 1, 1999.

For purposes of City Code Section 1218.02, the required landscaping that has to be replaced, if in the future it becomes diseased or dies, is the following:

The three new Canadian Hemlock trees identified on the August 21, 2015 alternative landscaping plan.

The holder of the private driveway easement is responsible for replacement.

This resolution is adopted by the City Council of the City of Sunfish Lake this 1st day of September 2015

Molly Park, Mayor

Attest:

Catherine Iago, City Clerk