

Agiorgitis, Rachel

From: Christin Eigenmann <ceigenmann77@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2026 6:47 PM
To: Wentworth, Emily; Planning; Agiorgitis, Rachel
Subject: 22 Howe Street - Concerns Regarding Proposed Landscaping and Site Plan
Attachments: 22 Howe Pictures.pdf

Dear Rachel, Emily, and Members of the Hingham Planning Board,

We are direct neighbors of 22 Howe St and are writing to express our concern regarding the proposed landscaping and site plan.

While the proposed plan may appear reasonable when viewed in isolation, we believe it is important that the Planning Board consider the plan in the context of the property's actual condition prior to the extensive removal of mature vegetation. The entire property was cleared of trees immediately following the closing of the property on May 22, 2026. As a result, neighboring properties have experienced a dramatic and immediate change in their surroundings, including the loss of mature tree canopy, shade, privacy, wind protection, and natural vegetation.

The scale of this change is particularly significant because many of the trees removed were mature specimens that had taken decades—some more than 50 years—to reach their previous size. The attached photographs document the property's condition before the clearing and illustrate the magnitude of the change.

We are especially concerned that the proposed landscaping plan appears to treat the property in its current, completely cleared condition as the baseline. In our view, this does not adequately account for the environmental, visual, drainage, and neighborhood impacts resulting from the loss of the mature tree canopy. Planting new, small-caliper trees in approximately the same locations does not restore the functions or benefits of the mature trees for many decades.

We respectfully ask the Planning Board to consider the following issues and request that the applicant address them before the proposed plan is approved:

1. Restoration of the lost tree canopy

The clearing removed more than a dozen mature trees, including two trees approximately 36 inches in diameter. The submitted plan proposes six deciduous trees of approximately 3-inch caliper.

Although we appreciate the inclusion of replacement trees, six small-caliper trees cannot provide anything close to the shade, screening, wind protection, ecological value, or visual character of the mature canopy that was removed.

We therefore ask the Board to require a substantially more meaningful restoration plan, including consideration of:

- Increasing the number and size/caliper of replacement trees;
- Using larger, established trees where feasible to provide more immediate canopy restoration;
- Ensuring that planting is appropriately distributed along property boundaries where the loss of screening and shade has most directly affected neighboring properties;

- Selecting species appropriate for long-term canopy development, stormwater management, and resilience to changing climate conditions; and
- Establishing an appropriate maintenance and replacement requirement to ensure that the proposed canopy actually becomes established.

We would also ask the Board to evaluate whether the proposed number and placement of trees adequately restores the pre-clearing conditions, rather than simply satisfying the minimum planting requirements for the newly submitted plan.

2. Drainage, stormwater, erosion, and wind impacts

The removal of a substantial number of mature trees and their root systems can materially affect stormwater infiltration, runoff, erosion, soil stability, and wind exposure.

The loss of the interconnected tree canopy has also changed wind conditions for neighboring properties and may increase the vulnerability of remaining mature trees that previously benefited from the protection provided by the surrounding tree canopy.

Given the scale of the clearing, we respectfully ask that the applicant provide a professional assessment of the potential impacts on surrounding properties, including:

- Changes to drainage and stormwater runoff;
- Potential erosion and slope stability issues;
- Changes in groundwater infiltration;
- Increased runoff toward neighboring properties; and
- Increased wind exposure and potential vulnerability of remaining trees on adjacent properties.

We further ask the Board to require appropriate mitigation measures if the assessment identifies impacts resulting from the clearing and proposed site development.

3. Impact on neighboring vegetation and microclimate

The removal of the entire tree canopy has substantially increased sunlight, heat, and wind exposure on neighboring properties. This has been particularly noticeable during the current period of drought and extreme summer conditions, when surrounding trees, shrubs, and other vegetation are already under significant stress.

The mature trees previously provided shade and helped moderate the microclimate of neighboring properties. That benefit cannot be recreated immediately through the planting of small replacement trees.

We therefore ask the applicant to address the impacts that the clearing has already had—and may continue to have—on neighboring vegetation and to identify appropriate measures to mitigate and, where possible, repair documented damage resulting from the loss of the previous canopy.

4. Proposed ball court

We also ask that the applicant provide additional detail regarding the proposed ball court, including:

- The type and permeability of the proposed surface;

- Measures to minimize noise impacts on neighboring properties;
- Proposed lighting, including fixture type, hours of operation, intensity, and measures to prevent light spill onto neighboring properties;
- Measures to minimize visual impacts; and
- Any additional drainage or runoff associated with the court.

Looking beyond the immediate site plan

We fully understand that the Planning Board must evaluate the plan before it. However, we respectfully ask that the Board not consider the proposed landscaping solely in the context of what is being proposed today.

The property had a mature, established landscape immediately before the clearing. That landscape provided benefits that cannot simply be replaced by newly planted trees. The consequences of removing decades of established canopy will persist for many years, potentially decades, before replacement trees can provide comparable shade, screening, stormwater absorption, wind protection, habitat, and visual character.

We therefore respectfully ask the Planning Board to consider the **pre-clearing condition of the property, the impacts already experienced by neighboring properties, and the long-term consequences of the loss of mature vegetation** when evaluating the proposed plan.

Our goal is not to prevent appropriate development of the property, but to ensure that the significant impacts of the clearing are acknowledged and appropriately addressed as part of the current review, rather than allowing the cleared condition to become the new baseline.

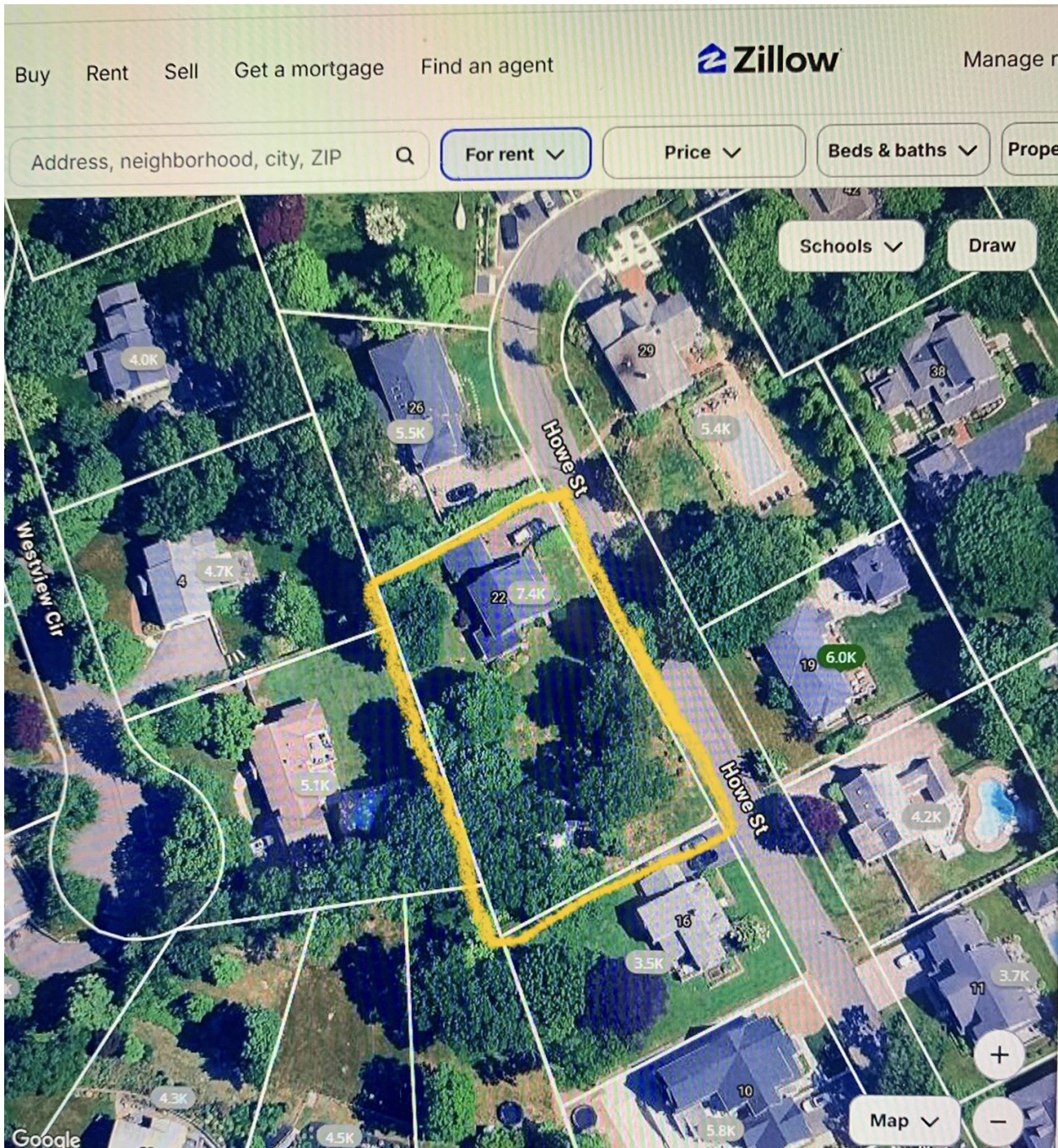
We appreciate the Planning Board's careful consideration of these concerns and respectfully request that adequate restoration and mitigation measures be established before the project is approved.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christin & Christoph Eigenmann
29 Howe Street, Hingham

22 Howe Photos



Estimated 50% Tree Canopy Coverage Prior to Clearing

The 22 Howe lot outlined in yellow appears to contain substantial mature tree cover before clearing. Based on a rough visual and pixel-based estimate of the aerial image, the lot appeared to be approximately **45–55% tree cover**, with a best estimate of roughly **50% canopy coverage** prior to removal of trees.

— Canopy estimate generated by ChatGPT image analysis using Zillow aerial imagery



A listing photo from before the old house was torn down and the new house built. This is a side view of the old house, taken from the large lawn (to the left of the house when facing the property on Howe St). Most of the trees were along the perimeter of the lot.



(Fri 22 May, 9:04am) One of the first trees to come down.



(9:14am) Some of the many tree removal vehicles on site.



(9:14am) The grouping of four trees near the front-center-edge of 22 Howe (i.e. streetside, by the orange cone & can) was still standing.



This is a different angle on the streetside grouping of 4 trees.



(1pm) The last of the group of 4 trees coming down.



(1pm) First truckload of large sections of tree trunks and limbs about to depart the property.



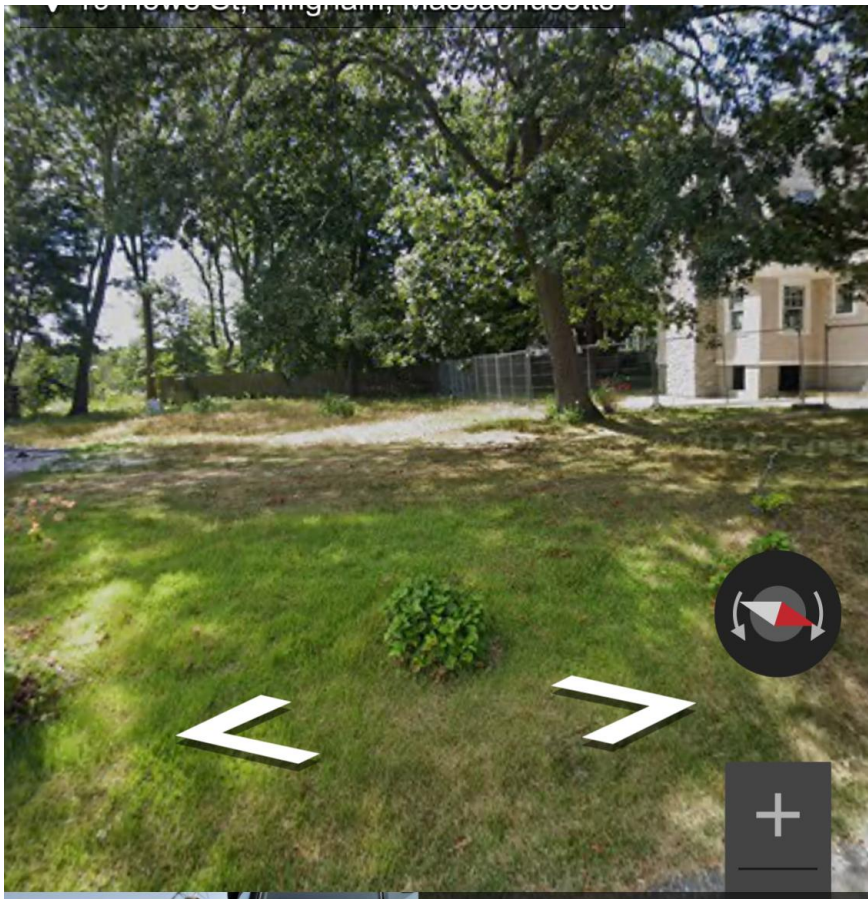
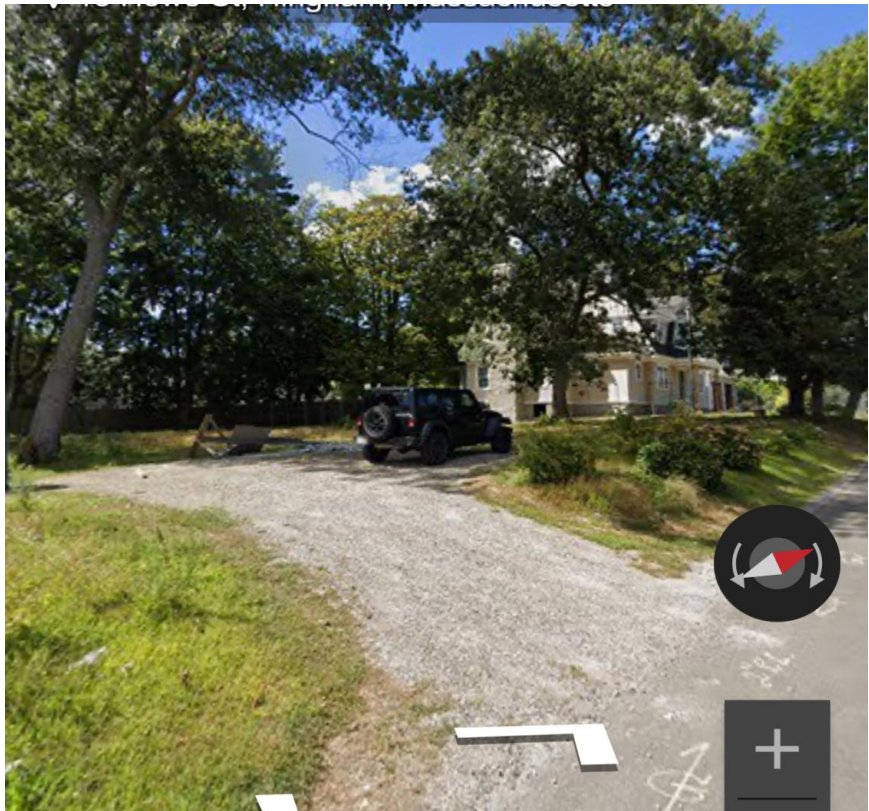
(5:31pm) Second truckload of tree trunks and limbs.

BEFORE & AFTER PHOTOS taken from 6 Westview Circle, located behind 22 Howe. Note the large wall of trees along the fence.



Note: The leftmost house is 22 Howe. The (now visible) light gray house is 19 Howe, across the street from 22 Howe. All trees were removed along fence line.

BEFORE PHOTOS taken from front of 22 Howe, viewing left side of property and newly built house



AFTER PHOTOS of 22 Howe lot (see lawn and house with chimney to right). Note 6 Westview Circle in background, behind fence. Previously obscured, it is now completely visible from Howe St.

