



# NORTHLAND

RESIDENTIAL  
CORPORATION

January 10, 2022, Updated 1.28.22

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Belmont, MA  
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Robert and Jolanta Eckert  
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Belmont, MA  
Via Email: robe@pmrllc1.com

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The Woodland at Belmont Hill II Condominium  
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Belmont, MA  
Via Email: stan\_rome@yahoo.com

Bill and Sandra Chen  
71 South Cottage Road  
Belmont, MA  
Via Email: leigo1@gmail.com

The Woodlands at Belmont Hill II  
c/o Mark Gouker, Trust Chair  
Via Email: gouker.mark@gmail.com

**RE: McLean Zone 3 Buffer Plan Proposal**

Mr. and Mrs. Eckert, Mr. and Mrs. Rome, Mr. and Mrs. Chen, Mr. Gouker and Mr. Hummel:

Pursuant to Section 6B5.4 (i) of the Town of Belmont Zoning Bylaw, a *'Landscape Buffer should be provided between Olmsted Drive as it passes through Zone 3 and the townhouses located in Zone 2 of the McLean District'*.

To recap the meetings and correspondence to date: On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 Alan Aukeman of Ryan Associates and I met on-site with Mr. and Mrs. Eckert to review the Zone 2 interface with Olmsted Drive

and the prospective Zone 3 development proposal. The purpose of the meeting was to listen and understand the concerns of the abutting residents as best communicated by the Eckerts and to review the physical geometry and existing infrastructure of and within the area between Olmsted Drive (OD) and the most proximate residents located at 11 and 12 Meadows Lane and 68 and 71 South Cottage Road. This conversation generated a number of ideas for enhancing the buffer along the interface. On November 22, 2021 the four of us met again over Zoom for a follow-up conversation and to present to the Eckerts an initial scope for the proposed buffer enhancements. These two conversations were the basis of first draft of this memo dated December 7, 2021 which was provided to the Town, the Condominium Trust, and the Eckerts and the Romes.

On December 14, 2021 I received a request from the Condominium Trust that we also meet with Mr. and Mrs. Chen, of #71 South Cottage Road and received correspondence from the Chens on that same day outlining their areas of concern. Mr. Aukeman and I subsequently met with Mr. and Mrs. Chen at their home on December 21, 2021 to discuss these. This conversation highlighted several additional sightlines preferably screened over and above those previously identified.

On December 15, 2021 I received a letter from the Eckerts and the Romes responding to my memo of December 7, 2021. In it, they focused their response to the proposed buffer enhancements and terms as they affect the area immediate to their two homes, #68 South Cottage Road and #11 Meadows Lane.

On or about January 13, 2022, I received an email from Jolanta and Rob Eckert following up on this (1.10.22) correspondence seeking clarifications and/or additional input. A Zoom call with the Eckerts and Mark Gouker of the Condominium Trust was held on Tuesday 1.25.22 to discuss the points raised in the 1.13.22 email letter.

This mark up serves as a response to the correspondence and conversation.

Here, accordingly, we have updated the mitigation/buffer plan as proposed in the December 7, 2021 memo to reflect the additional concerns presented by the Chens and to incorporate the follow-up comments from the Eckerts and the Romes. This revised proposal is provided below for your and Board's consideration. For continuity, we have preserved the format of the December 7 memo wherein the interface between the two zones is broken out by area and each is addressed in turn.

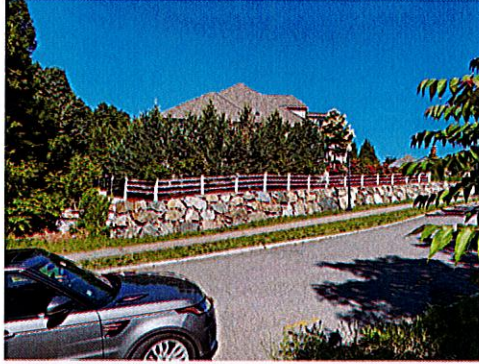
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#### Area 1 – Area south of South Cottage Emergency Access Lane (SCEA):

The interface of Olmsted Drive and Zone 2 below the SCEA lane adjacent to #71 South Cottage Road is best described as being effectively grade separated. With Olmsted Drive falling steadily away, the stone wall and existing planting provide for an abundance of protection and privacy to the west.

Geometrically, a 3' parkway strip lies between the OD road edge and the OD sidewalk followed by a second grass strip terminating at the base of a stone retaining wall. Above the wall lies the front and side yard areas of 71 South Cottage Road which is bounded by a white, three rail wooden fence located at the top of the stone retaining wall and dense planting, screening the unit's side elevation façade and front entry from OD and the prospective development of Zone 3. However, the existing planting is less effective at screening northward looking views from the #71's front entry porch and north facing dining room windows which look up Olmsted Drive. It is these views that were identified as an area of concern by the Chens and are addressed below.

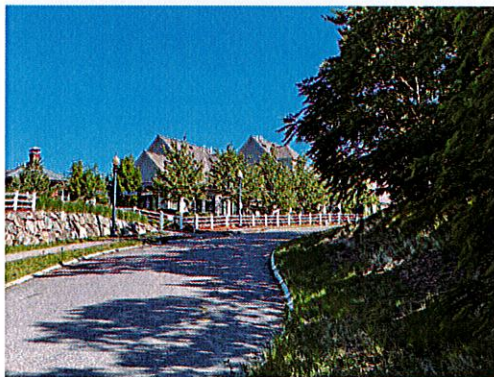
Area 1, Existing conditions:



Existing conditions @ #71 South Cottage Road and Olmsted Drive



#71 South Cottage Road with #68 South Cottage Road



Red Maples @ #68 South Cottage Road viewed from downslope



#### Proposed Improvements – Area 1

Pursuant to the submitted Design and Site Plan Approval drawings, dated 04/16/21, five street trees, 30' o.c. will be added to the Olmsted Drive parkway strip below #71 South Cottage Road. These five trees are called out as red maples (*Acer rubum*, 3-3.5" caliper). These trees are intended to provide additional screening upgradient and to extend along Olmsted Drive the established row of red maples found there along #68 South Cottage Rd, and #11 Meadows Lane (Area 2). See View #1 below. (all cited views are at end of document)

While the northernmost new street tree will begin to address the northward looking views up Olmsted Drive that the Chens identified as their concern, we also discussed with them the additional planting of 4-6, 6'-8' tall Arborvitaes and a flowering tree to achieve more immediate screening. This evergreen hedge, paired with a flowering tree will have the height and provide the year around interest that the existing roses lack in the critical location. View #2 shows the described additions. The new hedge is planted behind the rail fence with the flowering tree at the northern edge of the front yard. Mrs. Chen also expressed her desire to have the displaced roses transplanted elsewhere in the yard.

#### Offered Mitigation - Area 1–

Contribute \$4,500 to be used at Trust/Resident discretion for the design, purchase and installation of a plant view screen/hedge at subject unit by Trust/Resident(s).

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Contribute \$5,000 to be used by the Trust and the Trust's discretion for the design, purchase and installation of Taylor Junipers at the terminus of South Cottage Road.

#### Area 2 – Area between South Cottage Emergency Access Lane (SCEA) and the Meadows Lane Emergency Access Lane (MLEA):

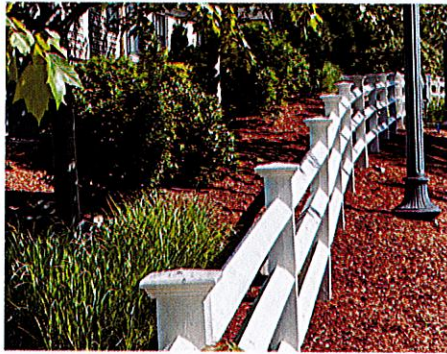
The interface of Olmsted Drive and the area between the two emergency access lanes is framed by a two-unit condominium building which steps up (or down) the grade, known more commonly as the Eckert /Rome Building (Eckert @ 68 South Cottage and Rome @ 11 Meadows). The Eckert/Rome building sits parallel to the orientation of OD.

Geometrically similar to Area 1, the existing conditions here include a narrower grass strip between the road edge and sidewalk and a mulched sidewalk shoulder along a white three rail fence. The fence sits on the property boundary/line of the Woodlands and the McLean Zone 3 parcel and frames in the side yard area of the Eckert-Rome Building. Within the side yard, existing evergreen shrubs and a row of red maples screen views from the building's side elevation windows and the unit's front entries to the east.

The following pictures depict the described condition of Area 2.



View from SCEA Lane looking uphill – WBH Unit # 68 South Cottage Road (Eckert) to left.



Edge Condition at Area #2 (uphill & down hill views)





### Proposed Improvements / Offered Mitigation – Area 2

Discussions with the Eckerts and feedback from them and the Romes landed on three components for achieving the desired buffer enhancements. We propose the following, subject to the approval of the consent of the Woodlands Condominium Trust. See Views #3 and #4 below.

1. **Masonry Wall** - Remove 16 legs, approximately 120 linear feet, of the existing three rail wooden fence located at the Woodland/Zone 3 property line and replace with approximately 120 feet of mortared stone wall measuring 42" in height, 15" in depth, and ~120' in length. Masonry wall to start at the third existing fence post from SCEA Lane and terminate at and by connecting to the existing stone retaining wall paralleling MLEA Lane – the existing MLEA wall and proposed masonry wall will connect. The existing rubble wall east of the Rome patio will be removed and graded into the proposed masonry wall. Barring any siting conflicts, the wall layout to be on-center with the existing fence and shall follow the arc of the sidewalk. Masonry wall work to be performed by Northland and to be of a kind and quality in keeping with the mortared stone walls at South Cottage of the Woodlands and/or the retaining wall along Olmsted Drive in Zone 3 below the Samuel Eliot Memorial Chapel.
4. **Ownership and Maintenance** – the proposed masonry wall shall be owned and maintained by Zone 3.
2. **Patio Privacy Screen** –At Eckert (68 SC) and Rome (11 ML) patios: privacy fence panels with lattice or other 'topper' along the side-length of the patio paralleling Olmsted Drive. Northland to Contribute \$10,000 to be used at Trust/Resident(s) discretion for the design, purchase and installation of Patio Privacy Screen by Trust/Resident(s).
3. **Buffer Planting** – Northland to Contribute \$30,000 to be used at Trust/Resident discretion for the modification or augmentation of existing planting beds at 68 SC and 11 ML paralleling Olmsted Drive. Work to be performed by Trust/Resident(s).

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### Area 3 – Area north (above) the Meadows Lane Emergency Access Lane (MLEA):

The interface of Olmsted Drive and the area above the MLEA Lane is along the side yard #12 Meadows Lane which backs onto Upham Bowl. In this area, Olmsted Drive begins its separation from the Woodlands property line as it turns sharply and climbs to the east. The existing sidewalk also begins to separate from the road as it courses toward the Hospital Campus.

The existing features here are similar to those already described: a grass parkway strip runs between the OD road edge and the OD sidewalk with a mulch bed bounded by white three rail fence beyond. The fence sits on the property boundary/line of the Woodlands and the McLean Zone 3 parcel and the side yard of 12 Meadows Lane inside the fence is substantially planted. As at Areas 1 & 2, the yard area was planted to screen views from the building's side elevation windows and the unit's front entries from Olmsted Drive and any prospective development of Zone 3. However, some of the existing planting is not thriving as can be seen in this image:



Edge Condition at 12 Meadows Lane, existing

### **Proposed Improvements – Area 3**

**Buffer Planting** – As at Area 1, the 04/16/21 Design and Site Plan Approval drawings show the addition of five street trees, 30' o.c. to the parkway strip and along the sidewalk edge as it turns to link to the hospital campus. These five trees are called out as red maples (*Acer rubum*, 3-3.5" caliper). These trees will complete the red maple row extending along the length of the Zone 2 and 3 interface. This planting doubles up with the existing side yard planting to screen west bound traffic traveling downslope. The remnant paving seen in the existing conditions photos will be removed and second fence line established in the side yard along the proposed Bldg #1 to further buffer the side and back yards of #12 Meadows Lane from Olmsted Drive impacts.

In addition to these improvements called out in the Design and Site Plan Approval submission, we propose additional planting to replace underperforming vegetation in Zone 2 with 3-5 new evergreens to match in species and kind the spruce that are doing well in this this setting. (Subject to the approval of the Planning Board and the consent of the Woodlands Condominium Trust.) Three are depicted in the illustration below, but three-five may prove necessary. Together, these evergreens, in form: broad down low, and the red maples: broader up above, will work together to provide the enhanced screening desired. See View 5.

### **Proposed Mitigation – Area 3**

Contribute \$3,500 to be used at Trust/Resident discretion for the design, purchase and installation of 3-5 new evergreens to match in species and kind the existing spruce planting.

Contribute \$2,500 to the Trust, in the form of a refundable escrow, for repairs, if any, encountered, in the planting of the above noted 3-5 new evergreens.

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### **Olmsted Drive Improvements:**

Along the western edge of OD beginning at the Building #1 driveway curb cut and running to the MLEA lane the existing granite curbing will be removed and relaid to provide a 4-5" minimum reveal.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Traffic Assessment OD will be centerline stripped with a solid double yellow line to demarcate the travel lanes, posted with 20mph vehicular speed signage, and pedestrian sidewalk crosswalk markings and crosswalk signage will be provided at the northern and southern curb cuts of Subdistrict A Road 1. The intersection of Olmsted Drive and Subdistrict A Road 1 will be signed as an all-way Stop – see attached plan titled Conceptual Improvement Plan.

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**Terms and Timelines:**

The above described improvements and the landscape planting allowances are contingent upon the issuance of a valid Design and Site Plan Approval which incorporates and licenses the commencement of the Zone 3 project as proposed, approval of the Woodlands Condominium Trust, and execution of an access license for construction of the masonry wall with the Trust.

The financial contributions (payments) noted above shall be made to the Condominium Trust or its designee within 60 days of Northland's taking title to the property.

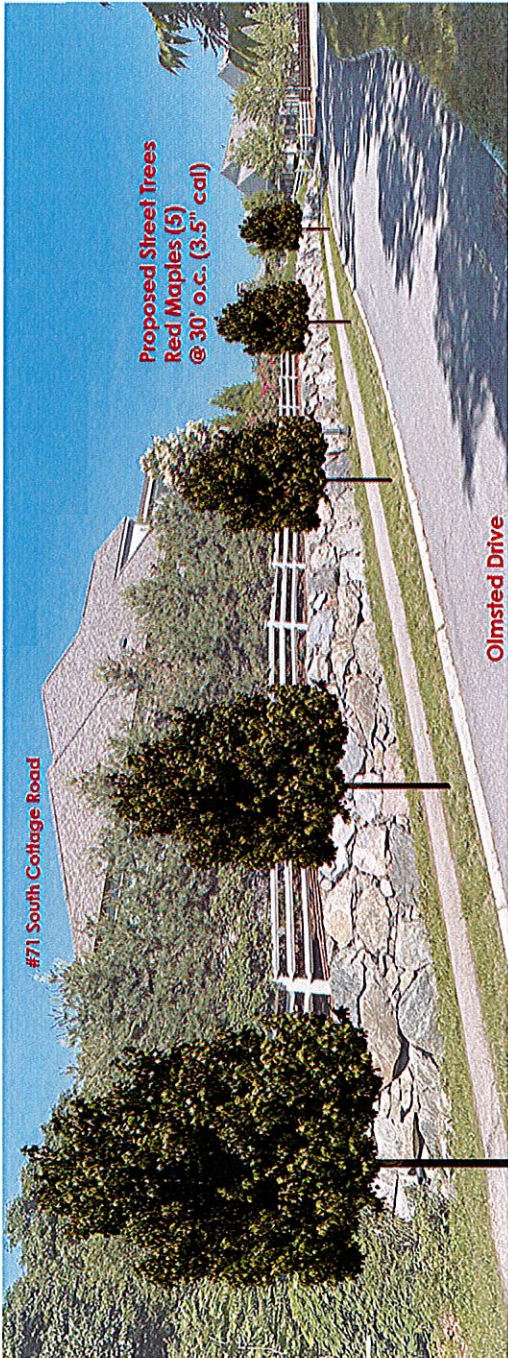
–The masonry wall work herein described ~~shall is to~~ be completed within 60 days of Northland's taking title of the property ~~months of the commencement of work~~, subject to seasonality.



John C. Dawley  
President & CEO  
Northland Residential Corporation

O – 781-229-4704





# View 1

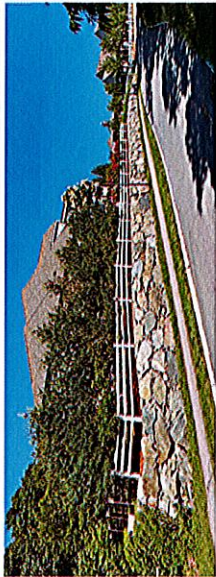
(Area 1)

## ZONE 2 / 3 BUFFER

@ 71 South Cottage Road

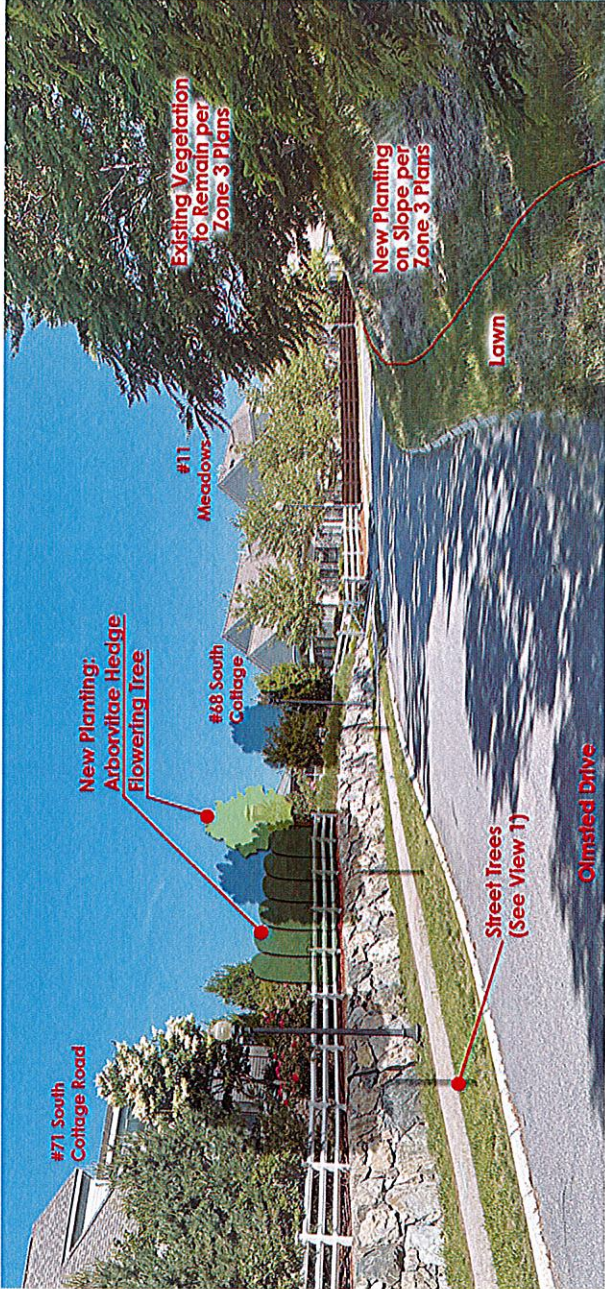
- Zone 3 Street Trees (By Northland Residential, Inc)
- Zone 2 Planting (see View 2)\*

\*By the Woodlands at Belmont Hill II Condominium Trust per agreement with Northland Residential, Inc.



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## View 2 (Area 1)

### ZONE 2 / 3 BUFFER

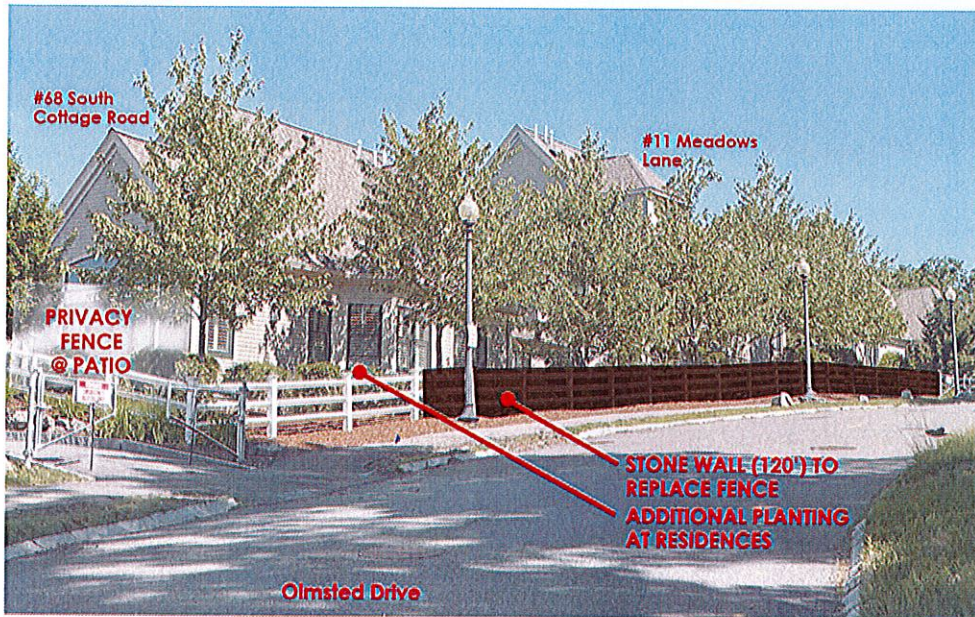
@ 71 South Cottage Road

- Zone 2 Planting at Fence Line\*
- Zone 3 Street Trees (see View 1)  
(By Northland Residential, Inc)

\*By the Woodlands at Belmont Hill II Condominium Trust per agreement with Northland Residential, Inc.







### View 3 (Area 2)

**ZONE 2 / 3 BUFFER**  
 @ 68 South Cottage &  
 #11 Meadows Lane

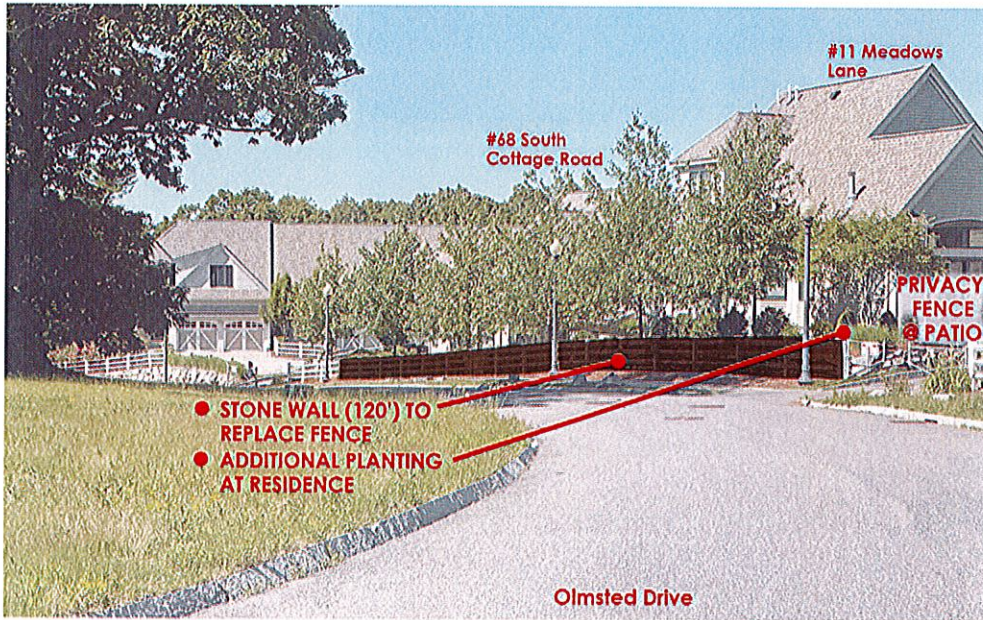
- Stone Wall (By Northland Residential, Inc)
- Zone 2 Planting at Residences\*
- Zone 2 Privacy Fence @ Patio\*

\*By the Woodlands at Belmont Hill II Condominium Trust  
 per agreement with Northland Residential, Inc.



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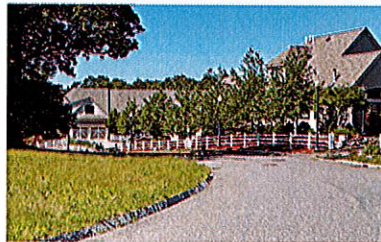
## View 4 (Area 2)

### ZONE 2 / 3 BUFFER

@ 68 South Cottage &  
#11 Meadows Lane

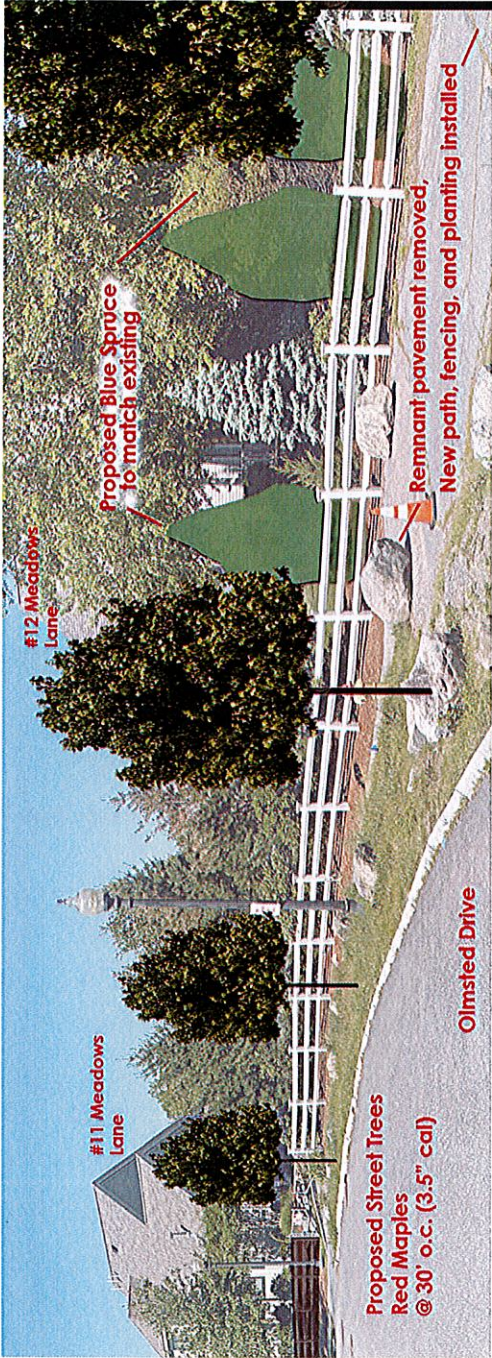
- Stone Wall (By Northland Residential, Inc)
- Zone 2 Planting at Residence\*
- Zone 2 Privacy Fence @ Patio\*

\*By the Woodlands at Belmont Hill II Condominium Trust  
per agreement with Northland Residential, Inc.



01/03/22





- View 5** (Area 3)  
**ZONE 2 / 3 BUFFER**  
 @ 12 Meadows Lane
- Zone 3 Street Trees (By Northland Residential, Inc)
  - Zone 2 Evergreen Planting\*
  - Zone 3 Sidewalk and Site Improvements (By Northland Residential, Inc)
- \*By the Woodlands at Belmont Hill II Condominium Trust per agreement with Northland Residential, Inc.

01/03/22