

Dear Michael,

Please pass along my letter to members of the PB for the Public Hearing on June 12 regarding tree trimming along Durham Pt. Road. I will be out of town that week.

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board,

I strongly encourage you to watch the June 3 Town Council discussion with Eversource and their arborist regarding the plans for cutting and trimming along Durham Point Road in order to install the 3-wire system and cable spacers (every 30 feet). Apparently some members of the TC originally thought the installation of the more resilient thicker wire would allow for a much smaller area to be trimmed around the wire. Councilor Lawson had noted engineering research which stated that there need be only an 18" limb-free zone around the new wire system. However Eversource still requires the standard 8 feet on both sides, 15 feet above and 10 feet below. Thus now Durham Point Road, a designated scenic road (a designation approved overwhelmingly by a town-wide vote), will have not only the thicker more visible cable and the 2-foot spacer cables every 30 feet on taller poles, but also the same huge area cleared as if they were using the less resilient system. Will this maintain the scenic nature of the road? It is doubtful.

I understand that following the TC discussion, Eversource revisited their plans to cut 137 trees within the right of way (and this does not include those trees on private property which they also would like to cut but that do not require town approval). They are now stating that they will cut only 47 within the right of way. While this reduction in the number of cut trees in the right of way comes as good news to some, let's not forget that the other 90 trees that aren't being removed will be severely trimmed to meet their standard tree trimming practices (regardless of the scenic road designation).

I urge the PB to vote no to giving permission to Eversource in hopes that they will be willing to refine their policy based on reliability research quoted by Councilor Lawson rather than convenience and in consideration of the fact that Durham Point Road is not only a designated scenic road but also an important historic road for the town. I understand that the reason for this immediate upgrade is the Seacoast Reliability Project, which has not been approved yet and is scheduled to be back under review by the Army Corps of Engineers. Should the PB reject the current request for permission, it is my hope that Eversource will determine they have much to gain from being more flexible in their trimming practices along this designated scenic road and come back with a more prudent and conservative tree trimming plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Beth Olshansky  
Packers Falls Road