

Durham Planning Board Public Hearing Testimony
Re: Eversource Tree Trimming and Removal Request
Sandberg
June 26, 2019

Let's be clear about what we have learned during this public hearing process.

1. There is no one who is opposed to reliable, safe and resilient electrical service.
2. Durham residents recognize the value of scenic Durham Point Road.
3. The issue before the Planning Board is strictly related to the trimming and removal of trees and disturbances of stone walls on a scenic road. Shall the Board grant permission to trim and remove trees and to what extent?
4. Eversource has stated its determination to install a new, 3-phase distribution system with "minimum impact" to the scenic character of Durham Point Road with a verbal commitment to remove what, in their opinion, would be the least amount of vegetation required to install the new system.
5. We know the new Eversource upgraded system will penetrate the existing tree canopy by up to 30 feet (15 feet taller poles plus an additional 15 feet of vegetation removal) and maintain up to 16 ft. clearance laterally.
6. There is nearly universal acknowledgement that the vegetation removal will seriously alter the scenic character of the road, both vertically and laterally, aloft and at ground level.
7. We have learned from professional urban forester Richard Hallett, PhD, that maintaining the tree canopy will inhibit scrubby plant growth and invasive species growth on the roadside and preserve views into the forested areas.
8. Safety issues related to sight lines for pedestrians and drivers is the Town's responsibility. This means that Eversource is not responsible for roadside vegetation maintenance below the 10-foot clearance zone.
9. On June 4, 2019 Town Administrator Todd Selig wrote, in part, to the Planning Board, "...I was very direct [with Eversource] that Durham was willing to sacrifice the level of reliability that the Public Utilities Commission 8 ft. clearance standard would afford in exchange for preserving the scenic character of Durham Point Road..."
10. The Board is being asked to authorize extensive vegetation removal without being offered an alternative plan, although,



11. Eversource has stated that when an application to remove and trim trees, is denied by a land owners or a municipality they “engineer around it”. In other words, there are other options, we don’t know what they are but we can be confident their engineers will develop options to accommodate the Town’s wishes and should be encouraged to do so.

To assist in moving the process forward, I respectfully ask the Board to move, discuss and adopt the following Motion:

- 1 **Whereas**, Durham Point Road has been designated a “scenic road” under RSA 231:15 for more than 45 years and
- 2 **Whereas** the Planning Board is charged with administering the statute, and
- 3 **Whereas** the Planning Board has held a required public hearing and taken input from the public, and
- 4 **Whereas** the Applicant, Eversource, has proposed to increase the height of utility poles by an additional 10 to 15 feet and
- 5 **Whereas**, the Applicant seeks to remove vegetation up to 15 feet above new, higher conductors, (10 feet below conductors and 16 feet laterally)

The Durham Planning Board finds the proposed enlargement of the vegetation free zone will adversely affect the scenic character of Durham Point Road and hereby authorizes Eversource to perform tree trimming and removal limited to only that necessary to maintain the existing vegetation free zone. It is understood that truly hazardous trees will be removed and that in the course of this work any damage to stonewalls will be repaired.

*stonewalls. - suckering stumps.
remove stumps?
- orange wrappings on poles?*