

Council discussion regarding Landscape Manual and Tree Conservation Ordinance at the 1/27/2003 Regular Meeting.

TW: This doesn't have anything to do with the motion, but maybe more energy should be put on amending the woodland conservation bill so that the escape hatches aren't so easy . . . if it truly is a woodland conservation bill.

JD: That might be something we may want to bring up with Councilman Peters.

RAM: Meaning you could get a waiver or go off site, but you could only go off site for so much.

JD: Yes.

TW: And there should be some burden to demonstrate why the purposes of the Act cannot be accomplished on site.

JD: We may want to put that on the legislative dinner agenda for future reference.

AT: The area that's even more ripe for improvement than the tree conservation legislation is the design standards for parking lots. I'd be a lot happier knowing that a speculative office building was going to be put in if it had a green roof and a parking lot full of trees that will mature in the lush Maryland climate and that at least in twenty years it's not going to be as bad as when it's first built. But there's nothing in the law that calls for that kind of design, and the free market isn't "out there" doing it around here, so it's not going to happen.

JD: It would be interesting if we got to Phase II . . . Phase II is site plan review. Is that something where we could start looking at issues like this with a little more power to do something?

RAM: If you get site plan review, you will have issues like this because these are site plan issues.

AT: But we can't go for a higher standard than the county has on its books.

JD: So we'd still have to work on the standards.

AT: And the county standard is way too . . . not enlightened.

RAM: There are two documents you're talking about. You're talking about the Landscape Manual, which basically deals with landscaping, not only within parking lots but everywhere. And the second one is the tree conservation ordinance, and there's no reason you can't talk to Councilman Peters to see if he'd be willing . . . I think you'd probably have some support at the Park and Planning level.