The Conservation Commission endorses the proposed tree ordinance and thanks the City Council and especially the Planning Department and Milan for their commitment to the environment and quality of life in the City by developing these rules. Almost a year ago as we watched neighborhood forests threatened by building projects we asked the City Council for a moratorium on development. This tree ordinance, which will be the strongest in the state, is one positive result of that request. We offer the following comments and recommendations:

- We do not support the alternate proposal that negates many of the necessary conditions of the proposed ordinance. It is time to enforce tree conservation in the strictest manner with the full ordinance. Let’s continue to lead the way.
- The ordinance needs to be implemented as soon as possible; a six month implementation period is dangerous. Given the rate of development and the economic incentive provided by the 300% increase in the cost of lumber, six months allows way too much time for developers and entrepreneurs to raze entire parcels of significant trees.
- The tree valuation process should focus much more on the habitat potential of the tree. According to Doug Tallamy, the author of *Bringing Nature Home*, the four most important trees for habitat are oak, willow, cherry or plum, and birch.
- The focus on a tree diameter of six inches or larger eliminates smaller, but also valuable habitat trees; this arbitrary measurement should be re-examined.
- Allowing a resident to cut down three trees without a permit is nonsensical. What time period is applied to this directive? It appears that a resident could cut down three trees a year forever. A reasonable time period needs to be developed; for example one tree in five years. This rule also needs to be applied to the property not the property owner.
- The draft ordinance contains a hidden gem – a viable definition of affordable housing. However, waiving permitting for affordable housing projects should automatically require an increased in lieu payment.
- The ordinance should require new development to plant at least two trees per lot.

*People who do not sustain trees will soon live in a world that does not sustain people.*