City Manager Richard Rossi

Dear Mr. Rossi, September 8, 2014

Thank you very much for your detailed letter and report from DPW staff to City Council on the Silver Maple Forest, describing your conversations with town leaders from Arlington and Belmont, as well as the property owner.

While we certainly appreciate and understand the difficulties involved in preserving this important natural habitat and open space, we nonetheless feel very strongly that it MUST be preserved! To destroy these trees now, knowing what we know about climate change, ecological destruction and the importance of open spaces to our dense urban communities would be unconscionable.

In your letter you mention the complexities involved in trying to preserve this forest, and we agree. However, these are not insurmountable obstacles. Concerns about raising the funds necessary to purchase the forest are secondary to securing an opportunity to purchase the property in the first place. There are many potential sources of funding to purchase the forest, including those outlined in the DPW report. In addition there are potential state and private resources available as well.

You state in your letter that there is “a desire by some leaders in these communities to preserve the land for open space.” In fact it is not merely a desire on our part but a conviction that this is a moral imperative to preserve this land! For too long humans have treated natural habitat as mere land for us to build/mine/farm on. We simply cannot carry on this way without endangering the future for our descendants and ourselves. Preserving the Silver Maple Forest is a necessary step in safeguarding our future.

Lesley University faculty have presented evidence that preserving the forest is in fact a cost effective step in protecting the city from dangerous climate change. You mention the need to fund our efforts to become a net zero community, yet we cannot be an effective net zero community if we continue to allow the destruction of natural habitat that locks up carbon, releasing it into the atmosphere, and making climate change worse. Ongoing destruction of our natural environment will lead to increased future costs for the city and all of society as we struggle to deal with the inevitable consequences.

We urge you therefore not to give up on this important issue, knowing that we and our many partners are doing everything in our power to ensure this important natural habitat is preserved forever.

Thanks very much for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Quinton Y. Zondervan
President
Green Cambridge

Cc: City Council