



TOWN OF DARIEN

OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN

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FIRST SELECTMAN

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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

To: Darien Planning & Zoning Commission
Re: Site Plan Application #304, Land Filling & Regrading Application #450
Town of Darien, Diller Property, Nutmeg Lane
Date: May 7, 2019

As the Town of Darien's First Selectman, I'm writing in support of the collaboration between the Darien Parks & Recreation Commission and Staff, the Darien Public School and the Darien Athletic Foundation to make modest improvements to the Diller property for public and Darien High School athletic uses.

The 5-acre parcel bounded by residential properties on Holly Lane, Hollow Tree Ridge Road, Nutmeg Lane and the Darien High School property was purchased by the town in 1988 for \$500,000. The RTM dedicated the land as Park Property in 1997. The *Darien Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan of 1996* contemplated using the Diller property for the relocation of the tennis courts and some school parking to make way for the addition of a swimming pool to the high school campus (pg. 55-56) and/or additional lacrosse and soccer fields. The *2018 Darien Parks & Recreation Master Plan* (Section IX: Recommendations) identifies "providing universal access to all parks/facilities" and "expanding walking pathways and trail connectivity within parks" as key recommendations. The 2018 Plan specifies (Appendix A) a gravel trail, protected habitat areas, public parking on Nutmeg Lane and connectivity to the high school running route.

Application #450 is consistent with both park master plans and meets the Open Space objectives of Section 5 of the *2016 Town Plan of Conservation and Development*. While the subject plan allows for 6 on-street parking spaces on Nutmeg Lane and modest improvements to accommodate public access, no trees will be removed and no surface regrading will be necessary making the proposed improvements low impact and the facilitated activities passive in nature.

Parks & Recreation staff will maintain the town controlled portion of the trail and will ensure the site is clean and safe for public use.

We are grateful for the generous contribution from the Darien Athletic Foundation to facilitate this project and the wonderful opportunity it will provide for the high school cross country teams to hold home track meets as well as providing public access to a park parcel not currently available to our residents.

I urge the Planning & Zoning Commission to approve Site Plan Application #304 and Land Filling & Regrading Application #450.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayme J. Stevenson, First Selectman