

Letter To The Editor: Shingle Hill Development Falls Short On Climate Change Mitigation

- George Smith
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To the Editor,

There have been some recent developments in the mitigation of Climate Change and they relate to the Shingle Place Hill Project.

First, some background!

- "The latest assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) says that what we realized years ago -- in order to meet climate goals, we will have to remove carbon from the atmosphere even as we implement sharp emissions reduction. That puts the focus directly on the world's forests."
- The Harvard Forest and the New England Forestry Foundation, along with other nonprofits, have set a goal of no net loss of New England forests over the next 30 years.
- It has been established that these forests can sequester 30 percent of New England's total carbon emissions over that same period. How is this possible? First of all, our relatively young forest when left alone will continue to increase carbon removal and retention by increasing total biomass (roots, organic soil, forest floor litter, as well as increases in the canopy). In addition, however, by selectively and sustainably harvesting mature trees and converting them into long lived wood products, carbon sequestration is greatly enhanced. Cross lamination of timber creates building materials that can be substituted for steel and concrete with the enormous carbon output in their manufacture. Total wood construction of at least up to 10 storeys has been done in Europe and is catching on fast in this country. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is offering

\$1 billion in grants for initiations such as this. The Shingle Place Hill Project falls short of climate mitigation on several counts.

- It is cutting down seven acres of healthy forest. It will either be buried in a methane generating landfill or ground up into wood chips to be burned.

- Most likely they will not be using much wood but steel and concrete for all of those retaining walls, structural members, parking garage and foundations.

- Unlike almost all of our other affordable housing, these units are not within walking distance for shopping, beaches and parks making car trips necessary. I should add a couple of encouraging items. The goals for the New England Forest include the so called "Urban Forest" in municipalities such as Manchester. The FOMT has already planted a record 29 trees this Spring and will be planting more in the first fall planting within memory. Also, our New England climate is getting warmer already but it also getting wetter, making our forest less prone to fire, even if resulting in more flooding.

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