

To: Guilderland Planning Board

From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council

Date: November 30, 2009

Re.: Hildreth, Brandle Rd., Altamont

APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Beatrice Hildreth, 116 Brandle Rd., Altamont, NY 12009

Proposed Subdivision: A proposed two lot subdivision of 38.03 acres.

Location: Parcel is on both sides of road just north of D & H Railroad crossing on Brandle Road, on the outskirts of the Village of Altamont approximately one mile south of Main Street.

Zoning: RA3.

Site Inspection Summary:

Site Inspection Date: November 21, 2009.

Meeting Attendees: (November 16, 2009) Applicant's Representative Terry Hildreth (Applicant's son of P.O.Box 28, Voorheesville, NY) ; GCAC members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Herbert Hennings, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steven Wickham and John Wemple (Chair).

Inspected by: Applicant's Representative, Terry Hildreth; GCAC members Heller (and his son Sean), Hennings, McClelland, Reese, Wickham and Wemple.

Conclusions: Provided approval is given for the size of Lot 2 to be below the generally required 3 acres and provided an appropriate septic system can be installed, GCAC does not envision any major negative issues resulting from the requested subdivision. In an effort to provide sufficient line of sight for a driveway, Presenter plans to clear some of the vegetation from the area along Brandle at the north east corner of Lot 2. Because of the age of the existing residence as well as the Dutch Barn, the Town should have these buildings noted by the Town Historian in an effort to protect the ongoing existence of these structures for future historical purposes.

Submitted by: _____

John G. Wemple, Jr. – Chair

INSPECTION DETAILS

Applicant(s): Beatrice Hildreth

Address: 116 Brandle Rd., Altamont, NY 12009

Background: At the November 16th GCAC Meeting, Presenter, Terry Hildreth (Applicant's son), gave a brief history of the property. According to Presenter, the property originally was part of the VanAernam property. Over the years, the Van Aernam property was split and the Applicant and her husband purchased their acreage in 1950. Presenter stated he was born and raised on the farm. He said his father had a small farm and boarded horses and hayed the farm which he said was fenced all the way around. Presenter went on to say he was the one who has maintained the property, apparently in hopes that it would be his someday. On the main portion of the property, which is on both sides of Brandle Rd., there is a Dutch Barn which his father had covered with metal to protect it. According to Presenter, there used to be a plank road down the middle in an easterly direction from the main structure which apparently had been used at one time as an inn for travelers to stay over night. This old road is shown on US Geological Survey map (Edition of Sept. 1903) which lead into the present Ehrsom Rd. Presenter is one of four sons, and he claims he is the only one who took an interest in the property. According to him, he was supposed to get the property but due to a turn in his financial situation he now is not able to do so. Thus, he figures he'll end up getting the acreage on Lot 2 from his mother. It is only about 2 1/2 acres. Presenter stated his brother, who is or will be executor of the estate, is unwilling to allow him another half acre from the main lot (Lot 1). This would bring the total up to the required three acres for proposed Lot 2. The Presenter had reportedly been told by the Town that he would have to obtain a variance but he indicated this requirement is now questionable. His plan is to have a medium size dwelling on Lot 2, if permitted. Plan is to most likely have the driveway for Lot 2 located on the north portion of the lot close to where the house would be built. Presently, there is a small, apparently fairly new shed on Lot 2 as well as a long shed on area on Lot 1 to the north of the residence.

Topography:

According to contour lines on MyTopo map, Lot 2 is fairly flat with a slight decline in elevation from west to east with this lot lying approximately midway between the lines for 400 ft. and 380 ft. Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL). The 380 ft. AMSL line cuts across the front portion of Lot 2 west of the existing house and barns and then appears to be flat on the remaining portion of the acreage. According to Presenter, the acreage is fairly flat with a slope to the east, toward Gardner Rd. At time of November 22 site visit, GCAC noted how generally flat the property is with a very slight slope toward the east and possibly southeast. There is also a slope down from the east side of the residence in the direction of the pond, which is noted on the Town tax map near the center of proposed Lot 1. It was further noted that the west edge of Brandle Road is about a foot higher than the east border of Lot 2.

Vegetation/Trees: According to Presenter, the main portion of the property was a hay field and the back (east) 5+ acres to the east is treed with white oak, poplar, ash and maple. He describes Lot 2 as an open field with cherry trees along the north edge and also maples and a couple elm trees. At time of November 22nd site visit, Presenter pointed out to GCAC various trees on the property and identified trees on Lot 2 as being ash and basswood which also has dense brush on the small triangular area at the southern corner of this lot. Along the southwest side bordering the railroad bed are elm; at the northwest corner maple and along the northern side are elm and large cherry trees. There is also thorny brush at this end of the lot. The major portion of the lot above (north of) the stream which cuts across the southern portion of the lot, is an open hay field. On Lot 1, there are a variety of trees most of which are along the northern boundary and on the rear (east) acreage. In addition to what the Presenter had noted at the Nov. 16th meeting, he further identified a black walnut near the stream about two-thirds of the way back on the lot, noted the white oak near the pond at the center of Lot 1, and a butter nut at the rear of the residence. On the south side of the stream, from a point about midway east back from Brandle Road, there is a wet area where there are cattails. Cattails were also observed to the west of the above noted pond. Other than the above noted trees and the heavily wooded area at the east end and a stand of trees north of the residence, most of the acreage of Lot 1 is open fields which at one time according to the Presenter was pasture land.

Soil: Presenter described the soil as being gravel. A review of Sheet Number 17 of the "Soil Survey of Albany County, New York" by James H. Brown (1992) indicates that except for wedge shaped area of ScA soil at

the northwest corner of Lot 2 which extends across about 3/4 of the northern boundary of the lot with a width of about 100 feet near the northwest corner where there may be a tiny area of ChA soil the soil on Lot 2 is BuA as is the front portion of Lot 1 above the stream back to a line that is approximately 350 feet from the road along the north side and 500+ feet below the stream area from the road. To the east beyond this area the soil is In on an area about 700 to 950 feet wide as well as the remainder of the area below the BuA just mentioned. At the rear (east) portion of Lot 1 there is a triangle of NuB at the northeast corner which extends about 200 feet along the north border and 400 feet along the east border. To the west of this, is another area of BuA soil which is about 500 feet wide at its widest point. To the south of this, at the area where the tributary to the main branch of the Black Creek meet, there is a triangular shaped area of Ra soil about 350+ feet by about 600 feet across. Below this area, along the rear portion of the south boundary is a 100 foot wide area of BuB soil that runs along the final 550 to 600 feet of that boundary. Just west of this is a small triangle of Ma soil about 75 feet wide.

Although the nature of BuA soil, which as noted above is the primary soil on Lot 2, is of main concern, a brief description of the various soils on the acreage and some of their limitations is as follows. This information is being included in this report since it may be useful if it becomes necessary to use a portion of proposed Lot 1 to make up the deficiency in square footage for Lot 2.

BuA – Burdett silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes – This very deep soil is nearly level and somewhat poorly drained. The seasonal high water table in the Burdett soil is perched on the clayey subsoil at a depth of 1/2 foot to 1 1/2 feet from December to May in most years. Permeability is moderate in the surface and subsurface layers and slow in the subsoil and substratum. Available water capacity is high, and surface runoff is slow. County soil survey notes that most of the acreage of this soil is used as hayland, pasture, or woodland. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Installing foundation drains and applying protective coatings to basement walls help prevent wet basements. Grading the land surface to divert runoff from the higher areas also helps reduce wetness. The main limitations for local roads and streets on this soil are the seasonal high water table and the frost-action potential. When wet this soil is soft and causes the pavement to crack under heavy traffic. Constructing the road on raised fill material will reduce wetness and prevent the road damage that the seasonal high water table causes. Providing a coarse textured subgrade or base material and installing surface or subsurface drainage will reduce the frost-action potential and enhance soil strength.

The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table and the slow percolation in the subsoil. A specially designed septic tank absorption field or an alternative system will properly filter effluent. An alternate system will include a drainage system around the filter to lower the water table, diversion ditches to intercept water from the higher areas, and an enlarged trench below the distribution lines to improve percolation.

BuB – Burdett silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes – This gently sloping soil is very deep and somewhat poorly drained. The seasonal high water table in this Burdett soil is perched on the clayey subsoil at a depth of 1/2 foot to 1 1/2 feet from December to May in most years. Permeability is moderate in the surface and subsurface layers and slow in the subsoil and substratum. Available water capacity is high. Surface runoff is medium. County soil survey notes that most of the acreage of this soil is used as hayland, pasture, or woodland. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Installing foundation drains and applying protective coatings to basement walls help prevent wet basements. Land grading and properly placed diversions will remove surface water. The main limitations for local roads and streets on this soil are the seasonal high water table and frost-action potential. This soil is soft when wet and causes the pavement to crack under heavy traffic. Constructing roads on raised fill material will reduce wetness and prevent the road damage that the seasonal high water table causes. Providing a coarse textured subgrade or base material and providing surface or subsurface drainage will reduce the frost-action potential and enhance soil strength. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table and the slow percolation in the subsoil. A specially designed septic tank absorption field or an alternative system will properly filter effluent. An alternate system will include a drainage system around the filter field to lower the water table, diversion ditches to intercept water from the higher areas, and an enlarged trench below the distribution line to improve percolation.

ChA – Chenango gravelly silt loam, loamy substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This nearly level soil is very deep and well drained or somewhat excessively drained. It is on glacial outwash terraces. The seasonal high water table is at a depth of more than 5 feet in most areas. The soil is subject to rare flooding. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate or moderately rapid in the subsoil and moderately rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is moderate, and surface runoff is slow. Rare flooding is the main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements. Nearby soils that are higher on the landscape and not susceptible to flooding, such as the

more sloping areas of Chenango soils, are better suited to this use. The main limitation of this soil for local roads and streets are rare flooding and the frost-action potential. Constructing roads on fill composed of coarse-grained subgrade or base material raised above flood levels will reduce flood damage and frost action. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are rare flooding and slow percolation in the subsoil. Nearby soils that are not subject to flooding, such as the more sloping areas of Chenango soils, are better suited to this use.

In - Illion silt loam - This nearly level soil is very deep and poorly drained. The seasonal high water table in this Illion soil is perched at a depth of less than 1 foot from November to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate or moderately slow in the surface layer and is slow or very slow in the subsoil. Available water capacity is high. Surface runoff is very slow. County soil survey notes that most of the acreage is used as woodland or brushland. The seasonal high water table or ponding is the main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements. Foundation drains, subsurface drainage systems, and protective coatings for basement walls help overcome these limitations. Grading to move surface water away from dwellings and diverting runoff from the higher areas also reduce wetness. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the seasonal high water table, ponding, and the frost-action potential. Wetness softens this soil most of the year and causes the pavement to crack under heavy traffic. A coarse textured subgrade or base material and surface or subsurface drainage away from the road site lower the water and reduce frost action. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table, ponding, and slow percolation in the subsoil. Other nearby soils are better suited to this use. A specially designed septic tank absorption field or an alternative system will properly filter effluent. A drainage system around the filter field and diversions to intercept water from the nearby higher areas will reduce wetness.

Ma - Madalin silt loam - This nearly level soil is very deep and poorly and very poorly drained. It is in depressions on plains and near hillsides. Areas of this soil are long and narrow or irregularly shaped and range from 5 to 80 acres in size. Slopes range from 0 to 3 percent. The seasonal high water table of this Madalin soil is at a depth of less than 1/2 foot between November and June. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderately slow in the surface layer, slow in the subsoil, and very slow in the substratum. The available water capacity is high. This soil is poorly suited to cultivated crops. The seasonal high water table is a limitation. Closely spaced subsurface drains in

combination with open ditch drainage lower the water table, Drainage outlets are generally difficult to establish because of the basinlike topography of this soil. A conservation tillage system, cover crops, and tillage at the proper moisture content help maintain soil tilth and organic matter content. This soil is moderately suited to pasture. Rotation grazing, proper stocking rates, and restricted grazing during wet periods help keep the pasture in good condition. The main limitation of this soil for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Diversions placed above the building site, foundation drains, and a protective coating on basement walls help prevent wet basements. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the seasonal high water table, the low strength, and the frost-action potential. Constructing roads on raised fill material and installing drainage systems will increase soil strength. Providing graded subgrade or base material to frost depth will reduce frost action. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table and slow percolation. Adjacent soils that are higher on the landscape are better suited to this use. Septic systems on the higher areas of this Madalin soil and on areas of better drained included soils will adequately filter effluent. A drainage system around the absorption field and diversions to intercept runoff from the higher areas will reduce wetness. Enlarging the absorption field or the trench below the distribution lines will improve percolation.

NuB – Nunda silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes – This gently sloping soil is very deep and moderately well drained. The seasonal high water table is at a depth of 18 to 24 inches from March to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and in the upper part of the subsoil and slow to very slow below. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is medium. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Foundation drains and interceptor drains upslope from construction sites divert runoff and lower the water table. The main limitation of this soil for local roads and streets is the frost-action potential. Constructing roads on coarse textured fill material provides drainage away from the roadway. The main limitation affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table and the slow percolation in the subsoil and substratum. Installing a drainage system around the absorption field and diversions to intercept runoff from the higher areas will reduce wetness. Enlarging the absorption field or the trench below the distribution lines will improve percolation.

ScA – Scio silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This nearly level soil is very deep and moderately well drained. Seasonal high water level is at a depth

of 1 1/2 to 2 feet from March to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and subsoil. The available water capacity is very high, and runoff is slow. Main limitation for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Installing foundation drains with adequate outlets will lower the water table. Erosion is a hazard during construction. Excavations and cutbacks cave or slough easily. Main limitation for local roads and streets is the frost action potential. Constructing roads with coarse textured fill material and installing surface and subsurface drainage reduces the frost-action potential. Cutbacks cave or slough. The main limitation affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields is the seasonal high water table. Installing drainage around the field and intercepting runoff from the higher areas will reduce wetness.

Ra – Raynham very fine sandy loam – The seasonal high water table is at a depth of 1/2 foot to 2 feet from November to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Main limitation on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Foundation drains and interceptor drains upslope from construction sites divert runoff and help prevent the damage that the seasonal high water table causes. Soil is better suited for dwellings without basements. Main limitations affecting local roads and streets are the seasonal high water table and frost action potential. Constructing roads on coarse textured fill material will reduce the frost action potential. Raising the level of the fill will reduce wetness. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table and slow percolation.

Drainage/Wetlands: According to Presenter, the property drains to the east toward Gardner Road and the Black Creek marshlands. He noted that Lot 1 has many small ditch lines which run west to east with another ditch which runs north to south across these and joins up with the seasonal stream and then flows toward the east and the Black creek. He further noted that on Lot 2, there is also drainage from the railroad bed. Because of the dam built by beavers, he noted that there is now about five to seven acres of wetlands on the east end of the Lot 1. While the contour lines on the topo map of the area indicate that the stream may run across the rear of Lot 1 from south to north, the water now flows in a north to south direction due to the work of the beavers. Presenter noted that the depth of the water is sufficient to have a boat on it.

Contour lines on topo map (US Dept. of the Interior Geological survey map of the Altamont Quadrangle [photorevised topo map 1980]) indicate natural drainage to be from west to east. While application states there is a small stream running through southern tip of property – dry nine months of the year; the Town tax map shows the second watercourse

running from or into that stream in a south to north (or north to south) direction, connected to part of the Black Creek, which ends up flowing into the Bozen Kill about 1 1/2 miles north of the property. While the Town tax map shows a marshy area starting about 400 feet north of the Applicant's property, the topo map shows a marshy or swampy area over a half mile long including most of this portion of the creek as it flows across Lot 1. Old topo map (US Geological Survey 1903 edition) does not show any marsh lands in this area; and it also shows and the west to east feeder stream

ran slightly more south to the Black Creek which did not at that time run into the Bozen Kill at a point in Altamont where part of it presently does run but much further to the east just south west of the intersection of Becker Rd. and Rt. 158 which is where the main portion of the Black Creek enters the Bozen Kill today. At the time of the Nov. 22 site visit, GCAC noted the dual 36" culvert under Brandle Rd. for the stream to travel from Lot 2 to Lot 1. The flow of this watercourse was quite swift for about the first half of its route toward the east end of the property but then was slow as it approached the wet area of the back woodlands where it was too wet to continue the inspection. To the south of the pond area at the center of Lot 1 there is a good size area that is wet. Also, looking back into the wooded area as well as along the adjacent neighbor's property to the north of the woodlands there is much standing water, apparently the result of beavers which, according to the Presenter, have built a dam further to the north. At the driveway entrance to Lot 1 there is a small culvert which apparently provides for north to south drainage along the east side of Brandle Road.

Septic/Wells: Plan is to hook up to an extension of the Water district and to have a septic system. Presenter noted the percolation on Lot 2 is questionable and he may need to have a "transvap" system (raised bed system) installed. As to where to locate this system, it was pointed out to him that he will have to consult with the county Health Department. Plan is to hook up to the Village water system although, according to the Presenter, the availability of well water is quite sufficient. Lower (south) tip of the building envelope for Lot 2 is approximately 150 feet from the watercourse, described on the application as a small seasonal stream, which runs across the southern tip of Lot 2. On Lot 1, the existing residence has a well in front of it and septic to the rear off its north east corner.

Visual Impact: Due to the density of the wooded area along the north and southwest sides of Lot 2, which creates a natural buffer, it is felt by GCAC that the visual impact would be negligible if a small or medium size residence were built on proposed Lot 2 .

Endangered Species: None that the Presenter knows of but he did note that there are beaver, deer and an occasional coyote. He further noted that there was a black bear on the property near the residence about a year ago. At time of site visit, Presenter pointed out the damage done to an ice box on the porch in the bear's attempt to open it. GCAC also observed a small herd of deer heading in a north direction in the east woodland area of Lot 1.

Historical Considerations:

According to disc from Town Assessor's Office, existing dwelling on the property was built in 1830. There is an small family cemetery (VanAerman cemetery on the adjacent Trumpler property, which GCAC had looked at in Feb. 2004), to the south of the Applicant's property along Brandle Road a short distance south of the railroad crossing. The Presenter noted that there is no cemetery on the property and no headstones although they had found old stones apparently with some writing and a rock with a date of 1860's on it. On Lot 1, the barn is a Dutch barn. At time of Nov. 21st site visit, Presenter let us look inside the Dutch Barn and showed us various inscriptions on the planks and structure of its interior. On the front of a stone slab under the east side porch entryway of the house the following is engraved "JHVA 1841" which the Presenter interprets to be for Jacob H. VanAernam. There is also a flat stone on a pile of stones at the east end of the front porch east with an engraving of a year in the 1860's.

Submitted by: _____

John G. Wemple, Jr. – Chair