

**To: Guilderland Planning Board**  
**From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council**  
**Date: August 4, 2009**  
**Re.: Paonessa - Norfolk Street, Albany, NY 12203**

### **APPLICATION**

**Applicants: Thomas Paonessa, 31 Pine St., Albany, NY 12203 (Town of Bethlehem)**

**Proposed Subdivision: A proposed subdivision which includes five lots in Guilderland and the remaining lots in Bethlehem.**

**Location: South west corner of Monroe Avenue and Norfolk Street - east of Woodscape development in the McKownville area of the Town abutting the Town of Bethlehem boundary line.**

**Zoning: R - 10.**

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### **SITE INSPECTION SUMMARY**

**Site Inspection Date: July 25, 2009**

**Meeting Attendees: (July 20, 2009) Francis Bossolini, presenter; GCAC members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Herbert Hennings, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steven Wickham and John Wemple (Chair).**

**Inspected by: GCAC members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Herbert Hennings, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steven Wickham and John Wemple (Chair). Applicant's representative was absent.**

**Conclusions: While GCAC realizes that much of the drainage of the parcel would appear to flow away from the proposed lots, there is concern that much of the drainage from lot 4 and 5 may naturally flow toward the area of the long driveway of the Bethlehem lot 6. Hopefully tree cutting will be kept to a minimum, but it is envisioned that the development and necessary grading will result in the loss of most of the trees. The developer should be encouraged to save at least some of the existing mature trees. As an alternative, to minimize the spread of the wetlands, appropriate tree planting should be incorporated in the final plan. Due to the drop in elevation from the roadway along Monroe Avenue, appropriate plan for storm water management will need to be considered in the plan. As noted under Septic/Wells section, the availability of water and sewer utilities should be firmed up by the applicant. Furthermore, development and extension of Norfolk Street should be further explored with both Towns.**

While lot sizes do appear to meet the minimum square footage required, the required side setbacks of 12.5 feet appear to be barely met with little room for adjustment of dwelling size nor for additions which may be desired in the future.

GCAC would also like to note that on the adjacent land to the west of the Applicant's parcel, there is an area of standing water that appears to be created by run off. This pond or swamp should have the same issues as standing or stagnant water, creating possible odor, mold, mildew and bacteria and a probable breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects such as black flies thus creating a possible health risk to animals and birds and continue up the eco-system to humans from diseases like West Nile Virus. Any change in the topographic make up to the area should require, at the least, that this water not increase in size becoming a potential hazard.

Because of the potential effects the development of this site may have on the neighboring property in the Town of Bethlehem, the Planning Board should consider sharing this report with that Town.

GCAC does not envision any major adverse effect to the environment in Guilderland by the development of this proposed portion of the subdivision in Guilderland provided the various precautions noted above are included in the plan.

One side note - At the corner of the vacant house, on proposed lot 2, there is a dog house which appears to be in recent use. Hopefully, provision will be made for care of the animal when the parcel is developed.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chairperson

### INSPECTION DETAILS

NY 12203

Site: Paonessa, Norfolk Street, Albany,

Date: July 25, 2009

Background: According to the presenter Francis Bossolini, the owner Paonessa Builders has been assembling lots for this planned subdivision which includes land in both the Towns of Bethlehem and Guilderland. The Paonessas live in a residence near the Southeast corner of the proposed subdivision. They have been acquiring property in order to complete the grid of streets for the project, the most recent acquisitions being the northernmost area comprising the parcel on which proposed Lots 1 through 9 are located, five of which are in Guilderland. From what the

presenter stated, it appears that the Guilderland portion will be the first phase of the subdivision.

**Topography:** According to the presenter, there is a rise in the topography along Norwood Street with the proposed lots being slightly above the road. A review of the contour lines on the site drawing, provided with the application, shows that the mid-portion of the five lot subdivision is at 112 feet Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL). It appears that the elevation decreases to about 110 feet AMSL near the northeast boundary line on Monroe Avenue as well as along the south east boundary on Norfolk Street; and to an altitude of 106 to 108 feet AMSL at the south west corner as well as along the north west boundary line. Along Norfolk Street, it was observed at time of 7/25 site visit that the street initially dips down slightly from Monroe Avenue but then rises back up along the latter part of the Guilderland portion of the Street. It was also noted that the parcel is lower than the elevation of the road along much of the Monroe Avenue side of the property. The area around the abandoned house, which stands near the center of the parcel, is a fairly flat segment on the highest part of the property. From that point it is relatively flat to the north and east but does have a noticeable drop in elevation to the south west and north west. It should be noted that at the time of the 7/20 meeting with the Applicant's presenter it was agreed that the presenter would have someone present at the 7/25 site visit, but unfortunately the individual was absent. This in turn put GCAC at the disadvantage of relying on estimates and approximate location of the property lines and location of the wetland area. As can be seen from the contour lines on the site drawing, lots 2, 3 and 5 are relatively flat; lot 1 has more of a slope toward the north decreasing from 112 feet AMSL at the rear south corner to 108 feet AMSL at the north corner; and lot 4 slopes down from the rear of the proposed residence from 112 feet AMSL toward the south west to a low area at the south west corner of the parcel where the elevation is near 106 feet AMSL. This latter area is a flat damp area of wetland.

**Vegetation/Trees:** According to the presenter, the lot is a vacant area with light woods with a mixture of primarily deciduous trees. At site visit of 7/25, an abundance of vines and thick vegetation was encountered along Norfolk Street. Along this side of the property there is a very large weeping willow tree plus three other large deciduous trees. Along the Monroe Avenue there are also two or three birch trees on lots 2 and 4 and tall deciduous on lot 1. Further in on the parcel there is a very large pine tree in the area of lots 2 and 3. Near

the mid-section there were birch trees and a large pine west of the abandoned house. Much of the property has fairly heavy underbrush and vines especially the outer portion of the area near the roadways. Fern was observed near the front quarter of lots 2 and 3. On the property several very tall, straight and sturdy maples having a diameter of about 5 inches were also observed.

**Soil:** According to the presenter, soil is not the greatest if considered for a septic system. At time of 7/25 site visit, soil appeared to be firm even in the damp wetland area.

A review of sheet number 19 of "Soil Survey of Albany, New York" by James H. Brown (1992), most of the Guilderland portion of the proposed development has ScB soil. This soil was noted on the above mentioned soil map (Sheet #19) as covering all of Lots #1, #2 and #3 and most of Lot #5 and the front portion of Lot #4. There is Ra soil on the rear area of Lot #4 extending to the southwest from a line approximately 25 feet to the rear of the proposed residence on that lot. There is also a triangle of Ra soil at the south west corner of Lot #5. This covers an area about 60 feet along the boundary line between Lot 4 and 5 and about 75 feet along the south boundary line of the parcel. It should be noted that a soil map of the area from the National Resources Conservation Services website was also reviewed and showed the Ra soil on Lot #4 extended further to the north to a point approximately where the tip of the south west corner of the proposed dwelling will be located. Likewise the size of the area of Ra soil on Lot #5 is also slightly larger.

A description and limitations of these two soils is as follows:

**ScB Scio 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 1 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 medium. 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. Erosion is a hazard during construction. 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.** This nearly level soil is very deep and poorly drained. The seasonal high water table in this soil is at a depth of 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 to use as sites for dwellings without basements. Main limitations effecting 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

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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 the presenter, the development of the full subdivision will require a small Corp of Engineering permit in Bethlehem. There is a small area of wetlands to the west of lot #1 and in #4 four and can be seen on the site map on the southwest corner a lot #4. The presenter pointed out that there will be very little grating and that they will try to have a buffer by the wetlands. He noted that the drainage is to the south east. From the contour lines on the site map it appears that natural drainage is in all directions away from a mid-portion of the Guilderland area of the subdivision. At time of 7/25 site visit, no streams or water courses were observed. Likewise there was no standing water despite resent rainy period. Although GCAC did not have the benefit of a representative nor a wetland map, flags presumably some of which were wetland delineation flags were observed in the area noted as wetland on the sketch drawing provided by the applicant. When a wetland map does become available to the Planning Board, it can be better determined that GCAC was in the proper area presumed to be the wetlands near the north west corner of lot 4 (flags A-10, A-17 and A-20 are among the flags observed by GCAC in this low damp area).

**Septic/Wells:** Plan is to use Town water and Town sewer. At the July 20 meeting, the presenter was advised to check with the town or towns on the availability of these utilities. If wells and or septic systems are needed, see limitations of the soil noted under the Soil section of this report.

**Visual Impact:** Presenter noted that the five lot subdivision will result in a less dense area of structures than the rest of that part of the community. This is debatable when compared to the properties on the opposite side of Monroe Avenue as well as on Norfolk Street. A closer look at the density of the proposed development in comparison with the neighboring area may result in a need to scale down the number of proposed lots in order to maintain consistent density. Also, as a result of the planned development of this parcel, a degree of privacy presently afforded by the thick existing

woods will be lost to those residents living on the south east side of Norfolk Street.

**Endangered Species:** Presenter noted that the subdivision is in the early stage of determining the presence of any endangered species and that they haven't encountered anything yet. None observed by GCAC at time of 7/25 site visit.

**Historical Considerations:** Presenter noted that the subdivision is in the early process of determining the presence of any endangered species, they haven't encountered anything yet, and they haven't come across any evidence of a cemetery. None observed by GCAC at time of 7/25 site visit.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chairperson