

To: Guilderland Planning Board
From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council
Date: April 30, 2012
Re.: Spawn Farms Phase Two, West Old State Road, Schenectady, NY 12303

APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Neil Spawn, 121 Schoharie Plank Rd. West, Altamont, NY 12009

Proposed Subdivision: A proposed three lot subdivision of 23.8 acres.

Location: Northeast corner of West Old State and Fuller Station Roads.

Zoning: R-40.

Site Inspection Summary:

Site Inspection Date: April 21, 2012

Meeting Attendees: (April 16, 2012) Presenter Mark Blackstone; GCAC members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steven Wickham and John Wemple (Chair).

Inspected by: GCAC members David Heller, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steven Wickham and John Wemple (Chair).

Conclusions: The Phase Two plan, with the reconfiguration of the two larger lots and a shared driveway is a much more feasibly approach to develop the property without disturbing much of the wetlands. GCAC foresees a minimal amount of negative effect on the environment if the development of these lots follows the provisions set forth by NYS DEC and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Hopefully the shared driveway, most of which is on the east lot (2823), does not create any problems related to maintenance and snow removal especially in the future. Thus, there will be a need to have the conditions related to the driveway spelled out clearly in the deed. Careful consideration will also be needed in just how the restricted wetland land areas will be identified to prevent trespass and misuse. Fencing of these areas might be difficult since the end result could have a negative effect on the wild life that travel through these areas.

In reviewing the path of the shared driveway for the two larger lots, GCAC discussed the possibility of having it turn to the east slightly earlier, but the proposed plan does appear to be reasonable in its attempt to minimize wetland disturbance.

The line of sight at the entrance of the shared driveway for lots 2819 and 2823 should be checked out more closely. It was reported by one of the GCAC members who had parked his car right where the proposed shared driveway would start on W. Old State Road. Upon completion of the 4/21 site visit, while he was sitting in his car on the shoulder, facing east, he could not tell whether or not there was any oncoming traffic. He noted that the driveway does not start exactly on the crest of the rise in W. Old State Road; and from where he was looking, the line of sight was poor. This being the case, for safety's sake, careful consideration should be give to moving the location of the start of this driveway to the actual crest of the rise on W. Old State Road.

Submitted by: _____
John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chair

INSPECTION DETAILS

Applicant(s): Neil Spawn

Address: 2815-2823 West Old State Road,
Schenectady, NY 12303

Background: The Spawn Farm was reviewed and inspected by GCAC in September 2010 as part of the subdivision application process when it was being considered for a four lot subdivision. According to the 4/16/12 presenter, Nark Blackstone, because of delays for wetland permits, the portion of the property on which the existing old house and barn stand was broken out as a single lot. As a result, 23.3 acres of vacant land were left of the original 26.8 acre farm. Applicant, Neil Spawn, requests consideration of a three lot subdivision of these remaining acres. Since the applicant has already received necessary permits from US Army Corps of Engineers and NYS DEC for disturbance of an allowable small amount of wetlands as well as buffer areas. GCAC's site inspection and report is concerned with the areas on the three proposed lots where development is planned. At the April 16th GCAC Meeting, after a brief discussion with the presenter, it was agreed with him that the various items as was reported in the GCAC Report of September 2010 remain the same. Therefore, for details regarding topography, vegetation/trees, soil, drainage/wetlands, septic/wells, visual impact, endangered species and historical considerations, the September 30, 2010 on line report should be referred to by accessing the Town websites GCAC 2010 archives. These various items should be considered unchanged unless otherwise noted in this current report.

In Phase Two of the subdivision, the lot lines for the smaller lot (2815) at the southwest portion of the property remains the same as in the 2010 plan. Through a reconfiguration of the dividing line between the other two larger lots (2819 and 2823), the middle lot (2819) increased approximately 1.8 acres in size and the northeast lot (2823) decreased an equal amount. Relocation of the driveways for these two larger lots plays a significant part in the resulting plan to minimize the amount of wetland disturbance. Plan is to have a shared driveway for access to these two lots, whereby the entrance is at the top of the crest of the hill on W. Old State Rd. to maximize line of sight distance. The proposed plan will have the driveway start along the boundary line of these two lots going back and downward for the first 50+ feet and then taking a 40° turn to the east for approximately 150 feet to a point slightly east of the center of the front portion of lot 2823. From that point, the shared driveway heads northeast about 200 feet to a fork at which point the driveway splits in two with one driveway continuing northeast to the building area of the middle lot (2819) and the other driveway going to the east to the building area of the east lot (2823). As a result of this reconfiguration, the wetland disturbance is minimized. A small area will be disturbed near the highway. It was noted at time of the April 21st site visit that because of the rather steep slope downward from W. Old State Rd., there will be a need to build up the driveway at the bottom of the hill in the area of the wetlands where the driveway takes the 40° turn to the east. Here, as well as at the area on lot 2815 where the driveway crosses the same wetland finger, appropriate and adequate culverts will be needed to guarantee the water flow in these areas. Appropriate culverts will also be needed for the two driveways at the wetland areas where they cross as they approach the respective building areas on those two larger lots. Location of house and garage on the west lot (2815) appears appropriate with the building area being located on a slightly elevated area. A review of the soil survey information used for the 2010 report indicates that the house and garage would be on an area containing Scio silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (ScA) soil. Based on information regarding this soil, in "Soil Survey of

Albany County, New York” by James H. Brown, 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 driveway is the frost action potential. Constructing driveways with coarse textured fill material and installing surface and subsurface drainage reduces the frost-action potential. The driveway for this lot is on both ScA soil and Colonie Loamy fine sand, 3 to 8 percent slope (CoB) soil. The same reference book by James H. Brown states that this CoB soil has no limitations on sites for dwellings and for roads and streets. The site of the proposed dwelling on the middle lot (2819) is primarily on ScA soil and possibly some CoB soil and the garage appears to be on CoB soil. At the time of the April 21st site visit, the location of this dwelling was scrutinized resulting in a suggestion that it may be better positioned if it were moved slightly more uphill and closer to the planned garage area. End result would slightly increase its elevation and distance away from the wetlands. The dwelling on the east lot (2823) is on CoB soil and Elnora loamy fine sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes (EnA) soil. The James H. Brown reference book notes that the main limitation of EnA soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. It further states installing foundation drains, applying protective coatings to basement walls, and diverting surface water away from dwellings help prevent wet basements. Main limitations for local roads are moderate frost action potential and seasonal high water table. Adequate drainage of surface water and constructing the road on a coarse textured subgrade and base material help overcome these limitations. The garage would be on CoB soil. The location of part of the dwelling being on the wetland buffer area is questionable, but if NYS DEC permits this to happen, this is basically their decision. At the time of the site visit, there did not appear to be anything to negate this decision. The driveways to these two lots on areas of ScA and CoB soils, the limitations of these soils are already noted.

Topography: Property is relatively flat with a slight roll.

Vegetation/Trees: Area for development is mostly a hay field. There is one large tree near the sight of the proposed dwelling on the middle lot.

Soil: See above in reference to the types where the property will be developed.

Drainage/Wetlands: There is a considerable amount of area covered by wetlands but plan is to limit disturbance thereof to 1/10 acre as set forth in the permits received from State and Federal governments. At time of April 21st site visit, portion of property walked was quite dry with some dampness in soil examined on a portion of the wetlands. Similar to the time of the September 2010 site visit, the recent site visit was during a period lacking in precipitation. A 4/17/12 inquiry to online weather information indicated precipitation in March was 1.91 inches short and an additional shortage of 2.85 inches to that point in April.

Septic/Wells: Plan is to hook up to existing Town water and sewer systems.

Visual Impact: Visual impact should be minimal since two of the dwellings will be set back at a considerable distance from the road.

Endangered Species: None noted at time of April 21st site visit. The presenter did note that the number of deer was less than previously.

Historical Considerations: Nothing of historical significance noted at time of April 21st site visit. The old house, built in 1833, is no longer a part of the property.

Submitted by: _____
John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chair