

To: Guilderland Planning Board
From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council
Date: April 26, 2013
Re.: Sbardella, 5958 East Old State Road, Schenectady, NY 12303

APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Steve Sbardella, 1571 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12205

Proposed Subdivision: A proposed two lot subdivision of 1.28 acres.

Location: Property is on the small portion of the Town on the north side of the Thruway, located approximately 1.1 mile west of the Pine Bush Discovery Center.

Zoning: R-40

Site Inspection Summary:

Site Inspection Date: April 20, 2013

Meeting Attendees: (April 15, 2013) Applicant Steve Sbardella; GCAC Members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Gordon McClelland and John Wemple (Chair). Steven Wickham recused.

Inspected by: Applicant Steve Sbardella; GCAC Members Stephen Albert, David Heller, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese and John Wemple (Chair). Steven Wickham recused.

Conclusions: Applicant said he was surprised at the number of neighbors who attended the recent public hearing of his proposed subdivision. These neighbors are reportedly opposed to the subdivision. There is a question as to the proposed lot(s) not meeting the minimum lot area requirement of 40,000 sq. ft. Applicant feels that other lots in the neighborhood do not meet this requirement. A review of the size lots in his immediate neighborhood shows that with the exception of the one lot to the north east opposite Lot 2 none of these lots meet the 40,000 sq. ft. requirement and only the two lots across from the Applicant meet the required 200 ft. frontage. Thus, based on this, the Applicant may need a zoning variance if he is to subdivide his lot according to the concept plan drawing since the area of the property is only 55,600 ± sq. ft. Applicant also noted that the size of the lot to his south, along the Dead End Road, is similar in size to the proposed Lot 2, both of which do not meet the required 40,000 sq. ft. minimum requirement.

If the Applicant is able to obtain an appropriate zoning variance, GCAC does not see much, if any, negative impact to the environment from the development of this proposed subdivision provided the location of the well and septic system for lot 2 are approved by the County Department of Health; and that an acceptable stormwater management plan is submitted related to any disturbance of drainage resulting from possible soil redistribution or change of the topography depending on just where the residence for lot 2 is located.

It should also be noted that the Applicant did mention the possibility of removal of some of the soil from this property to another location; but he was advised by GCAC that if this is in the plan that he should check with the Planning Department for any required permit to do so.

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

INSPECTION DETAILS

Applicant(s): Sbardella

Address: 5958 East Old State Road,
Schenectady, NY 12303

Background: According to Applicant he has had the property for about one year. Zillow website indicates property was sold 12/15/11 for \$60,000 which is the same amount as Tax Assessor's site shows on the Town website. Subsequent to purchasing the property, Applicant rehab-ed the existing residence and currently rents it out. He said he is in the rental business and that the proposed new residence on Lot #2 will either be for his sister or as a rental property. Existing driveway of gravel/crushed stone is shown to exist at both front and rear of the lot. Applicant would prefer to have both driveways for lots 1 and 2 exit from the rear.

Topography: According to Applicant, much of the property is fairly flat with a rise in elevation toward the Road at the northeast corner. At time of 4/20 site visit, it was observed that there is a sharp rise of about ten feet along the area of Lot #1 that borders Old State Road. This ridge continues south east along the Road except for a cut through it for the driveway to a point about 2/3 of the distance along that side of the property with the height rising to about 15 ± feet before tapering down to about street level. To the south west of the driveway cut and adjacent to the area where there had been a garage, there is a fairly large cut in the hill from which soil had been excavated and dug out. Concrete floor of the garage remains. Much of the rest of the property is fairly flat with a drop off along a portion of Dead End Old State Road which runs along most of the south property line. This drop off is about 3 ± feet at its highest point.

Vegetation/Trees: Both lots 1 and 2 have a variety of sizes of trees. Lot L has some large deciduous trees along the rear portion and a mix of pines and deciduous trees on the hilly front portion along Old State Road. Lot #1 has some large pine trees on the hilly area along Old State Road as well as brush along the south and south east areas. There are a number of large deciduous trees (possibly oak) along the Dead end road (southern boundary) of Lot 2. It was also noted that there are wild strawberries and blueberries around that same area.

Soil: Type of soil not known to Applicant but a review of the soil survey map on the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service website, there are two types of soil on the property. Both are Colonie loamy fine sand. The major portion of the lot has CoA; and the northwest corner has CoC soil on a triangle. Based on the location of the existing residence as pointed out by the Applicant at the 4/15 Meeting, the front half of Lot #1 has CoC from just in front of the existing house northeast to the Road. This CoC section extends to the southeast on a curve to a point about 2/3 of the way along Old State Road. A description, taken from "Soil Survey of Albany County, New York" -1992 – by James H. Brown of these two soils, showing some of the soils limitations, is as follows.

CoA Colonie loamy fine sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This nearly level soil is very deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. The seasonal high water table in this Colonie soil is at a depth of more than 6 feet, but it can fluctuate to a depth of 3 ½ feet for very brief periods in early spring. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderately rapid to rapid. The available water capacity is low, and surface runoff is slow. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops. It is among the best suited in the County for food and fiber production. This soil is also well suited to pasture. The author notes that this soil has no limitations on sites for dwellings and for roads and streets. He further notes that droughtiness is a problem for establishing and maintaining lawns and shrubs. The main limitation affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields is a poor filtering capacity. Permeability in this is

moderately rapid or rapid, so the soil is a poor filter of effluent from septic tank absorption fields. Consequently, ground-water contamination is a hazard. A specially designed septic tank absorption field or an alternative system will properly filter effluent. Other soils that have a moderate permeability rate are better suited to this use.

CoC – Colonie loamy fine sand, rolling – This rolling soil which is very deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. Slopes range from 8 to 15 percent. The seasonal high water table in this Colonie soil is at a depth of more than six feet, but it may fluctuate to within 3 ½ feet of the surface for very brief periods in early spring. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderately rapid or rapid. The available water capacity is low, and surface runoff is medium. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the excessive slope on rolling topography. Designing dwellings to conform to the natural slope or landscaping helps overcome this limitation. The main limitation of this soil for local roads and streets is the slope. Grading and excavation costs are higher than in lesser areas of Colonie soils. Constructing roads on the contour wherever possible or landscaping and grading help overcome the slope limitation. The main limitation affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields is a poor filtering capacity. The soil has moderately rapid or rapid permeability and so is a poor filter of effluent. Consequently, ground-water contamination is a hazard. A specially designed septic tank absorption field or an alternative system will properly filter the effluent. Other soils that have a moderate permeability rate are better suited to this use.

Drainage/Wetlands: According to the Applicant, drainage is to the southwest and he noted that there is no standing water. Application form shows no wetlands, ponds or watercourses. Due to the topography, it does appear that the natural drainage would be south and southwest. GCAC also observed that apparently due to grading there is a slope on Lot 1 toward the neighbor on the northwest side of that lot but due to the amount of sand on that area there may not be much if any runoff from that area towards the neighbor.

Soil Survey map on the USDA website shows that the beginning of the east branch of the Hungerkill is on the opposite side of the Thruway southwest of the property and that this branch winds its course in a south west direction to the Normanskill.

Septic/Wells: Plan is to have well water and a septic system. Applicant noted that the water from the well on Lot 1 was good and that there is plenty of it and that there may be an aquifer on that lot. Since there is a question of there being sufficient distance of the proposed wells and septic system sites in relation to that of his neighbors, GCAC advised Applicant to work with the County Department of Health on this issue. At time of site visit, Applicant measured off approximately 100 feet from neighbor on the south and found that location of proposed septic tank on Lot 2 to be what he thought was an adequate distance.

Visual Impact: Applicant feels that the proposed dwelling on this subdivision would fit in with the neighborhood. Likewise, GCAC feels that a residence similar in character with neighbors would have little affect on the neighborhood especially if it is partly hidden by the existing trees or possibly built into the side of the hill. If the Applicant were to remove the existing trees, neighbors may complain due to the loss of the sound and sight barrier that they provide from the constant highway traffic on the Thruway which is just south of the property. Thus, removal of trees should be kept to a minimum unless they are to be replaced in some manner to help negate this impact.

Endangered Species: According to the Applicant he has not seen any Karner blue butterflies nor any bats on this property. No endangered species observed by GCAC at time of site visit

Historical Considerations: No Revolutionary War or Indian relics or cemetery known to Applicant on the property. Nothing of historical significance observed by GCAC at time of site visit.

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