

To: Guilderland Planning Board

From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council

Date: March 28, 2014

Re.: Salerno – 699 & 707 Altamont Voorheesville Road, Altamont, NY 12009

### APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Michele Salerno, 707 Altamont Voorheesville Road, Altamont, NY 12009

Proposed Subdivision: A proposed two lot re-subdivision of 52 acres.

Location: Property is located on the west side of Route 156 (Altamont Voorheesville Road) at the base of the Helderberg Mountains approximately 0.3 mile north of the Guilderland/New Scotland boundary line.

Zoning: RA-5.

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### Site Inspection Summary:

Site Inspection Date: March 22, 2014

Meeting Attendees: March 17, 2014 – Applicant Michele Salerno; GCAC members Kevin Connolly, Jacob Crawford, Sean Maguire, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steve Wacksman and John Wemple (Chair).

Inspected by: Applicant Michele Salerno; GCAC members Kevin Connolly, Jacob Crawford, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Steve Wacksman and John Wemple (Chair) on 3/22/14; and subsequently by Sean Maguire.

Conclusions: Since the property is very large in acreage and the proposed new lot is 3+ acres in size, there appears to be sufficient space for a building envelope to accommodate a residence on the new lot which may be needed to be located on the rear portion of the front area in order to be of an elevation to avoid potential flooding from the stream. GCAC feels that prior to settling on such a location a review of the flood plain should be done. If it proves that the location noted is too close to the flood plain, the lot line for the proposed should be modified and reconfigured so that a safer area is found, possibly further back to a portion just northeast of the wooded area. A further suggestion is that, in order to avoid possible future misunderstandings with the landowner to the southeast, a written agreement be made allowing the Applicant to continue to have his driveway cut across the neighbor's property and also to allow Applicant to continue to have his shed located where it is straddling the property line. An alternative would be to relocate the driveway and shed so they are entirely on the Applicant's property for for Applicant to purchase the small areas involved. While the Applicant did explain to GCAC at time of 3/22 site visit that he and the neighbor have a verbal understanding, something in writing may prove advantageous in the future. Provision will also need to be made for a driveway for new lot. GCAC also notes that the Nunda soils, which cover much of the front third of the Applicant's property, are subject to erosion; so it will be important to protect against that in case of land

disturbance such as building construction, especially since the proposed building site for the new residence is on that type of soil.

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

## INSPECTION DETAILS

Applicant(s): Michele Salerno

Address: 707 Altamont Voorheesville Road,  
Altamont, NY 12009

Background: According to Applicant. Michele (Mike) Salerno, he purchased the property in 2007. Property consists of two parcels, one a 3+ acre lot and the other a 48 acre lot. He states he had obtained approval to do a lot adjustment but since it wouldn't be a three acre lot he abandoned that idea. Nevertheless, he became aware of the Town provision whereby he could have a one time subdivision to accomplish what he wanted to do. He therefore is taking the opportunity to combine the existing two lots and then subdivide as shown in his plan. At time of 3/22 site visit, it was observed that the property has chicken coops and Applicant informed GCAC of the valuable chickens that he raises. Applicant also noted that he has ducks and that he has hay on the front lower portion of the property. The hay he gives to one of the neighbors. At time of 3/17, Applicant plans to do further farming.

Topography: Applicant noted that the property is very steep at the rear portion adjacent to Indian Ladder park. At time of 3/22 site visit, he pointed out the tall tree just below the Thatcher Park look out is at the top of his property. He further pointed out that the stream forming the one side of the property line is called Indian Creek. This stream, which was running at time of 3/22 visit, continues under highway through a fairly new looking large culvert. Applicant described the acreage as one that continues to decrease in elevation until it reaches the front along Altamont Voorheesville Road with the property also sloping toward the creek. At time of 3/22 site visit GCAC observed that the front area is relatively flat and much lower in elevation than the area where the existing residence is located. While the front area of the new lot is low and is wet at times according to Applicant, the area on which he envisions a residence to be built is a little higher and drier near the bottom of a slope that rises about 15 to 20 feet toward the rear. This new lot runs back along the stream with the stream forming the boundary on that side and the other side adjacent to the large lot having a boundary along the top of the ridge which is 20 to 30 feet higher than the stream. A review of topo map on TopoQuest website which showed USGA Map indicates that this property is at the base of the Helderberg Mountains. The contour lines at the southwest corner, which is just east of Horseshoe Lot near Indian Ladder, is approximately 1,100 feet AMCL (Above Mean Sea Level). From there, towards the front of the property, there is a very steep drop in elevation with a drop of over 500 feet from the rear corner to a point about 875 feet to the northeast. Forward of this, the terrain continues to be relatively steep with a drop in elevation of approximately 200 feet to the front of the property where the elevation is 400+ feet AMSL. The proposed lot would have this same 400+ feet AMSL elevation at the front and would rise to approximately 460 feet AMSL at the rear. Soil on front portion is CKB indicating a slope of 3 to 8 percent. To the rear of this new lot is NuD which indicates the slope is 15 to 25 percent. At time of 3/22 site visit, GCAC put its emphasis on the front portion of the property where it has been developed or where it is planned to be developed. Since nothing is planned for the wooded back acreage, GCAC determined that it was not necessary to go into the wooded area or up to the top near the escarpment although the Applicant offered GCAC a ride on his four wheeler.

Vegetation/Trees: According to Applicant, part of the acreage was logged about four years ago and he was not satisfied with the way the logger left the property. A concern he had was that the logger left tops of trees rather than removing them. Applicant states types of trees on the property are oak, maple, locust, hemlock and ash as well as a couple chestnut trees which may need some special care. Looking in to the back wooded area, GCAC did observe birch, poplar,

ash, white pine and hickory. Along the back portion of the front lower level of the new lot is a row of deciduous trees which may help in the stabilization of that portion of the property on the northeast side of the area built up with fill deposited there by the Highway Department when they did work in the area. Adjacent to the stream on the new lot GCAC observed maple, ash, hickory and poplar trees. Due to the amount of snow on the ground, it was difficult to determine what plants may be covering the property.

Soil: Applicant states there is a lot of clay and loamy soil on the property. Due to the amount of snow on the ground, it was difficult to determine what types of soil are on the property although some areas not covered by snow were muddy. A review of the soil survey map from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services website (Web Soil Survey) indicates that there is CkB soil on the front portion of the proposed new lot forward of a diagonal line running across the open area of that lot and across an area of the existing lot extending about 70 to 120 ft. back from the highway. To the rear (southwest) of this is NuD soil which extends about 1350 feet back from the highway with a strip of NuC along a portion of the south east side of the main lot. Beyond this NuD area, much of the midsection has MbE soil except for a small triangular area of NuC at the southeast corner, and an area of Fx along the second third of the northern boundary formed by the center of the creek. At the rear, there is an area of MbC followed by a FrF area at the west corner of the property. A feature noted on the Soil Survey map is a special symbol showing a very stony spot near the middle of this Fx area along the south edge of the creek. Below is a brief description and some of the limitations of these soils as noted in “Soil Survey of Albany County, New York” by James H. Brown (1992).

**CkB – Chenango channery silt loam, fan, 3 to 8 percent slopes** - This gently sloping soil is very deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. The seasonal high water table in this Chenango soil is at a depth of 3 to 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 subsoil and rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is low, and surface runoff is slow. This soil is well suited to pasture, but midsummer droughtiness retards plant growth. Proper stocking rates, rotation grazing, and yearly mowing help keep the pasture in good condition. The main limitations affecting this use of this soil as site for septic tank absorption fields are rare flooding and a poor filtering capacity in the substratum. The rapidly permeable filtering substratum is a poor filter of effluent. Consequently, ground-water contamination is a hazard. Nearby soils, such as the more sloping areas of Chenango soils that are not subject to flooding are better suited to this use.

**FrF – Farmington-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes** - This unit consists of a steep and very steep Farmington soil and areas of exposed bedrock. The Farmington soil is well drained and excessively drained. Depth to bedrock in the Farmington soil is 10 to 20 inches. It restricts rooting depth. Permeability is moderate throughout. Available water capacity is low, and surface runoff is rapid or very rapid. Most of the acreage is woodland or pasture. The main limitations of the Farmington soil on sites for dwellings with basements are the shallow depth to bedrock and the slope. The main limitations of the Farmington soil for local roads and streets are the shallow depth to bedrock and the slope. Roads should be planned around this map unit wherever possible. Designing roads to conform to the shape of the land and constructing them on raised fill help overcome these limitations. The main limitations affecting the use of the Farmington soil as a site for septic absorption fields are the shallow depth to bedrock and the slope. Also, ground-water contamination is a hazard in areas of limestone crevices. Other soils are better suited to filtering effluent.

**Fx – Fluvaquents** - Udifluvents complex, frequently flooded This soil unit consists of very deep, nearly level, very poorly drained to moderately well drained loamy soils formed in recent alluvial deposits on flood plains. These soils are subject to frequent flooding and are commonly

wet. Bedrock is generally at a depth of more than 5 feet. Permeability, the available water capacity, organic matter content, and soil reaction vary with the composition of alluvium. County soil survey notes that most of the acreage is used as woodland or pasture or is idle. These soils are not suited to urban uses because of periodic flooding and prolonged wetness.

**MbC – Manlius channery silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes** – This strongly sloping soil is moderately deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. Depth to bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. It limits rooting depth to 15 to 24 inches. Permeability is moderate. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the depth to bedrock. Areas of the included soils and nearby soils that are deeper to bedrock are better suited to this use. Erosion is a hazard during construction. Maintaining the vegetative cover adjacent to the site and diverting runoff help control erosion. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the moderate depth to bedrock, the slope, and a moderate frost-action potential. Carefully planning and constructing them on the contour will avoid cutting grades into bedrock. The bedrock is generally highly weathered and easy to rip with typical construction equipment. Providing coarse textured subgrade or base material to frost depth helps reduce frost action. The main limitation affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields is the depth to bedrock. Septic tank absorption fields in areas of included soils that are deeper to bedrock will properly filter effluent.

**MbE - Manlius channery silt loam, 25 to 35 percent slopes** -This steep soil is moderately deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. Depth to bedrock is 20 to 40 inches. It limits rooting to 15 to 24 inches. Permeability is moderate. Available water capacity is low. The main limitations of this soil for dwellings with basements are the depth to bedrock and the slope. Areas of included soils in this unit and nearby soils that are less steep and deeper to bedrock are better suited to this use. The main limitation of this soil for local roads and streets is the slope. Laying out roads on the contour and landscaping and grading help overcome the slope limitation. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the depth to bedrock and the slope. Other soils that are deeper and less sloping are better suited to this use.

**NuC – Nunda silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes**– This strongly 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 or very slow below. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is medium or rapid. 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 reduce wetness. Erosion is a hazard during construction. Maintaining the vegetative cover adjacent to the site and diverting runoff from the higher areas help control erosion. 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. Erosion is a hazard if these sloping soils are left unprotected. 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 and substratum. 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.

**NuD – Nunda silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes.** - This moderately steep soil is very deep and moderately well drained. The seasonal high water table in this Nunda soil is at a depth of 1 ½ to 2 feet 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 or very slow below. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is rapid. The main limitations of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements are the seasonal high water table and slope. Foundation drains and interceptor

drains upslope from construction sites divert runoff and reduce wetness. Cutting and filling in construction benches and grading help overcome the slope limitation. Erosion is a severe hazard during construction. Maintaining the vegetative cover adjacent to the site, diverting runoff from the higher areas, and mulching help control erosion. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the slope and the frost-action potential. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table, the slow percolation, and the slope. Installing a drainage system around the absorption fields 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. Installing distribution lines on the contour with drop boxes or other structures will ensure even distribution of effluent.

Drainage/Wetlands: Applicant noted that although there are wet area(s) on the property, there are no real wetlands. According to him, drainage is from the rear of the property to the northeast and north toward the creek and across the property following some swales toward the creek, and also toward the highway from the front area of the property. From observing the property, it appears that at least on the forward portion to the northeast of the woods drains toward the direction of the highway and toward the stream.

Review of the topo map indicates that there is a feeder stream slightly to the north and along the northern edge of the property, as indicated on the site drawing as the creek, which runs in a generally eastward direction and eventually empties into the Black Creek. Contour lines on the topo map indicate the natural drainage of the property is to the northeast.

An inquiry to the NYS DEC Environmental Resource Mapper did not indicate any wetlands on this site.

Septic/Wells: Applicant noted there may have to be a “mounded septic system”. As to water, he further noted that there is no problem with well on front of the property and he doesn't anticipate any problem getting water for another well. He stated there is an aquifer near the highway and pointed noted on the map where residents of Indian Ladder Estates have their wells a short distance from the front of his property.

Visual Impact: Applicant feels the development of the subdivision would not cause much adversity to anyone. Since the front portion of the proposed new lot is wide open, it will be easily seen from the highway. Nevertheless, if the structure is in good taste, it is doubtful that the visual impact would amount to much since there are many houses along this road.

Endangered Species: According to Applicant, there are no Karner butterflies; there are bats but no nesting. He sees other animals but no endangered species. He further noted there are salamanders, cray fish and other fish. At time of 3/22 visit, showed GCAC where he keeps his turtles during the wintertime. GCAC did not observe any endangered species at time of 3/22 visit.

Historical Considerations: Applicant is not aware of anything of historical significance on the property, but he noted there is the remains of the logging set up and a deteriorating saw mill. GCAC did not observe anything of historical significance at time of 3/22 site visit.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chair