

To: Guilderland Planning Board

From: Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council

Date: January 24, 2014

Re.: Knapp, 2810 West Old State Rd., Schenectady, NY 12303

APPLICATION

Applicant(s): Stuart Knapp, 6550 Route 158, Altamont, NY 12009

Proposed Subdivision: A proposed three lot subdivision of 3.5 acres.

Location: Approximately 0.9 mile west of Carman Road on the south side of West Old State Road opposite Fuller Station Road.

Zoning: R-20.

Site Inspection Summary:

Site Inspection Date: January 18, 2014

Meeting Attendees: (January 13, 2014) Presenter Donald Cropsie, Surveyor Tony Trimarchi; GCAC Members Kevin Connolly, Jacob Crawford, Gordon McClelland, Stuart Reese, Stephen Wacksman and John Wemple, Chair.

Inspected by: Applicant Stuart Knapp, Presenter Donald Cropsie; GCAC Members Kevin Connolly, Jacob Crawford, Sean Maguire, Stuart Reese, Stephen Wacksman and John Wemple, Chair.

Conclusions: Other than the possible issue of small areas of wetlands as noted under the Drainage/Wetlands section of the report, GCAC sees no negative environmental impact of this proposed subdivision provided tree cutting is kept to a minimum and any needed stormwater management is included in the final plan.

Submitted by: _____

John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chair

INSPECTION DETAILS

Applicant(s): Stuart Knapp, 6550 Route 158, Altamont, NY 12009

Address: 2810 West Old State Road, Schenectady, NY 12303.

Background: Applicant unable to be present at the January 13th GCAC meeting due to illness in the family. Thus, Donald Cropsie made the presentation along with surveyor Tony Trimarchi. It should be noted that Applicant, Stuart Knapp, did lead the group along with Don Cropsie on the site visit. According to Presenter, Applicant has owned the property since 1987 and presently the Applicant's mother lives in the residence which would be on Lot 1 of the proposed three lot subdivision. Plan is to subdivide and then possibly keep the lots for the Applicant's family members. One lot may be for Applicant's brother. Initial drawing of the subdivision included a Town street which would entered the property from W. Old State Rd. and go southwest along the western boundary and after about 450 – 475 feet loop back to the highway. This street would take 60 feet of the property and would provide room for driveways to Lots 2 and 3. In lieu of this conventional subdivision, which would have necessitated a new Town street to accommodate two houses, a revised plan was drawn whereby Lots 2 and 3 would be keyhole lots with one curb cut on W. Old State Road.

Topography: According to the Presenter, the property slopes gently to the south. A review of the contour lines on the topo map supplied GCAC by the Presenter, shows elevation at the northeast corner of the property as 306 ft. AMSL (Above Mean Sea Level) and at 304' near the north corner. The front half of Lot 1 is between 304 and 306 ft AMSL and then decreases in elevation to the south decreasing to about 298 ± ft. AMSL at the rear boundary line of Lot 1. Heading south, the contour lines continue to decrease to 286 ft. AMSL at the south east corner of Lot 3. At the time of the January 18th site visit, GCAC observed the dip in the elevation on the east side of the barn. It was further noted that there is a small drop in elevation along the northwest boundary. Likewise, GCAC observed that the property slopes downward toward the south and southwest at the rear of the property. Along the east side of Lot 3, there is a noticeable downward slope of about 2 to 3 feet.

Vegetation/Trees: According to Presenter, property was a field but during the period of 1990 – 1992 Applicant did reforestation and planted trees. Presenter said trees include conifers, Austrian pines, firs, crab apple, dogwoods and lilacs. Trees are used in Applicant's landscaping business. Presenter noted that Applicant does not plan on removing trees other than what is necessary to accommodate the structures on Lots 2 and 3. At time of site visit, GCAC observed large deciduous trees on Lot 1 - a large red maple to the east of the house as well as a large tree next to the driveway and one in front of the barn. There is a stand of trees along the east side of the property. Going toward the rear, initially there are pine and deciduous which are on the adjacent neighbors property; but further south along the property line, there are Austrian pine on the Applicant's property. Along much of the west side of the property there rows of tall evergreen trees including balsam and blue spruce. To the east of these trees, further into the lots are maples, crab apples and pine. Applicant also noted fir, white spruce and Norway spruce. On the rear lot he also noted pears. Along the east side toward the rear are some poplars which Applicant would just as soon be rid of. Because of the density of trees along the area planned for the driveway to Lot 2 and 3, it might be necessary to either cut down some of the trees along that side of the property or divert the driveway around them. This alternate approach may be feasible since there appears to be sufficient land to do so. On both Lot 2 and 3, there appears to be sufficient open space to accommodate the proposed residences.

Soil: According to Presenter, soil is sandy on top of knolls and lower is silty clayey soil. Much of the property was covered by snow at time of January 18th site visit.

A review of the map on the USDA Soil Survey website indicates there are three different soils on the property; they are CoB, Ra and ScB. According to this soil survey map the soil on Lot 1 appears to be entirely CoB. Front half of Lot 2 is mostly CoB soil and the rear is mostly ScB soil. The exception to this is an area somewhat wedge shaped of Ra soil which extends from along about 2/3 of the southeast boundary inward about seventy feet toward the midsection of this lot. It also appears that there may be a very small area of ScB soil along the southeast boundary line about seventy feet from the front boundary line of this lot. This same area of Ra soil extends to the rear of Lot 3 along its southeast side. This soil extends along this side and circles in toward the middle of the rear boundary line. Other than the driveway, the soil on the remainder of Lot 3 including its building envelope is ScB. The area of the driveway to Lot 2 has CoB soil. Likewise the front portion of the driveway for Lot3 is similar but near the area where Lot 2 driveway turns off to the southeast, the soil for Lot 3's driveway changes to Ra soil for about 70± ft. and then to ScB for the remainder of the drive.

A brief description on the three soils and some of the limitations of these soils, as found in "Soil Survey of Albany County, New York" -1992 – by James H. Brown, is as follows.

-CoB – Colonie loamy fine sand, 3 to 8 percent slope - This gently sloping soil is very deep and well drained to somewhat excessively drained. Typically, the surface layer is dark brown loamy fine sand about 7 inches thick. The subsoil is 61 inches thick. The seasonal high water table in this Colonie soil is at a depth of more than 6 feet, but in some years it fluctuates 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 or rapid. The available water capacity is low. This soil has no limitations on sites for dwellings and for local roads and streets. Droughtiness is a problem in establishing and maintaining lawns and scrubs. 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 soil is moderately rapid or rapid, and the soil 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.

- Ra - Raynham very fine sandy loam - The seasonal high water table is at a depth of ½ 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.

-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 ½ 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.

Drainage/Wetlands: According to the Presenter, the property drains to the south and to the west. He did note that there is possible wetlands on a couple small areas of the property. Based on a copy of the map showing wetlands for the adjacent property, it appears that there could be a continuance of the wetlands near the midpoint of the eastern boundary line of Lot 2 where it might jut in, in a triangular fashion, about 35 feet but the Surveyor had doubts since he did not visualize it going beyond the tree line which runs along this east boundary. Presenter also noted a small possible wetlands area at the far southeast corner of Lot 3. This triangular area juts in about 46± feet in from this corner. Reviewing this same map, it was further noted by GCAC that there may also be a smaller wedge of wetlands at the south west corner of this same lot. Presenter made note of the setbacks for the building envelopes which would insure that develop of the lots would not encroach on the wetlands. It was observed at the time of site visit that the property generally slopes in a south direction with a slope downward away from the property and along west border of Lot 1 and east border of Lot 3. The possible wetland area noted above along the eastern boundary on Lot 2 was observed as having very tall reeds. This area is small enough that it should not interfere with the plan for development.

Septic/Wells: Plan is to connect to Town water and Town sewer. Presenter noted that plan is to have grinder pumps and connect to Town system. At time of site visit, it was observed that there is an old well, which is not in use, to the rear of the house.

Visual Impact: Presenter feels that the planned development of this property would enhance the neighborhood with the arts and crafts style one story homes. Furthermore, it was felt that the vegetation would act as a buffer related to the visual impact area of concern and that there would be no impact for view from the Helderbergs. Development of the property as planned should have minimal visual impact on the neighborhood due to the high volume of tall trees on the property. Houses in the development to the south of the Applicant's property can be seen from Lot 3 and thus a residence on Lot 3 will undoubtedly will be seen by the neighbors in those houses.

Endangered Species: Presenter was not aware of any endangered species, including Indiana Bats, on the property. No endangered species were noted by GCAC at time of site visit.

Historical Considerations: Town Assessor's website list the date the house was built as 1850. Presenter did not know of any cemetery on the property. Presenter was unaware of the house being as old as it is listed; it could be that the barn is that old. Since there is nothing in the plan to do anything to the existing house or barn, the age of this structure does not appear to be a matter of concern at this time. Other than the old residence, which the Applicant thought was built in the 1890's, GCAC did not observe anything of historical significance. The barn and other out building may also date back many years.

Submitted by: _____

John G. Wemple, Jr. - Chair