

Village of Altamont Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular Meeting
November 28, 2023

Deb Hext, Chairperson
Danny Ramirez, Member
Simon Litten, Member
Robert Freeman, Member
James Sullivan, Board Member
Andrea Witham, Member (absent)
Laura Murphy (absent)
Laurie Pinze, Alternate
Charles Trout, Alternate

Gary Goss, Building Inspector/Code Enforcer
Ginger Hannah, Secretary
Tresa Matulewicz, Village Board Liaison
Jeff Moller, DPW Superintendent
Paul Miller, Fire Chief
Village Attorney Allyson Phillips

Applicants:

Ro Andres, Project Manager for CM Fox

Guests: 5

Chairperson Hext said good evening everyone. Welcome to the Village of Altamont ZBA meeting. My name is Deborah Hext. I'm the Zoning Board Chair. For the record, both the audio and video portions of this meeting will be recorded. At this time, I would like to welcome our two alternate Members, Chuck Trout and Laurie Pinze. She asked all the Members of the Board to please introduce themselves, which they did as follow: Danny Ramirez Charles Trout, Laurie Pinze, Simon Litten, Robert Freeman, and James Board Member Sullivan:. Thank you.

Also representing the Village tonight we have Ginger, Hannah, our ZBA Secretary; Tresa Matulewicz, our Village Board liaison; Gary Goss, our Inspector and Code Enforcer. And I am expecting our counsel, Allyson Phillips, to show up. We also have Jeff, our DPW superintendent here.

This is not a public hearing, it is just a meeting. Therefore, there will not be an opportunity for the public to speak tonight. You'll have ample opportunity when we do open the public hearing on the subdivision. Tonight our agenda has one item - we will be reviewing the latest updates for the CM Fox subdivision, as well as I would like to go over any comments that our Village Engineer Brad Grant had. So at that, Ro do you have some updates?

Ro Andres, Project Manager for CM Fox: Good evening Board Members. My name is Ro Andres, project manager for Walworth Surveying. Before you is the CM Fox Living Solutions 11 lot subdivision. I would like to thank the Board on behalf of myself and the design team for working with Barton and Loguidice to get the comments back to us. We're actively working on addressing these in hopes of being on the next agenda next month. So we have revised plans from our last meeting of which these comments are newly formed. So that's all I have.

Chairperson Hext: So these comments from our engineer, you haven't addressed anything.

Ro Andres: Correct. These comments are based off of this plan set that was submitted about two weeks ago.

Chairperson Hext: And what are the differences between this plan and the plan prior?

Ro Andres: There are items that we had addressed from Barton & Loguidice's prior design specifications. More specifically, we have added some drainage swales to further promote positive drainage. I know that was a concern that the Board had. We had added new structures - catch basins - more specifically towards Schoharie Plank Road. And we've also addressed the concern of a turning radius for firetruck apparatus on these plans, on both of the private driveways here. So again, this plan set that you have before you, that's a revised plan set from our previous meeting. And these comments are based off of these plans here.

Chairperson Hext: So have you had a chance to review Brad's latest comments?

Ro Andres: We have, and we're currently working on revising the plan set again, in hopes of being on the next month's agenda. I know that would be a submission in two weeks to have for you folks.

Chairperson Hext: I don't know if the Board has anything at this point, but I would like to at least for the benefit of the audience review what Brad has said. And maybe you can address some of these issues now.

Ro Andres: Absolutely.

Chairperson Hext: But I'm going to ask the Board before we get into that if we have any questions regarding what you're seeing here now, anybody?

Board Member Litten: You're asking our response to Brad's comments?

Chairperson Hext: No, if you've had a chance to overlook the newest plans, if you have any questions in regard to that. Otherwise, what I would like to do is just go through each one of Brad's findings and see if we can get some resolution tonight.

Board Member Litten: Well, I have some things that are just plain questions. First of all he writes in General, number four - confirm a basement is not proposed for lot one due to proximity to wetland. What wetland?

Ro Andres: There is no designated wetland. Upon our field visit, there were wet areas. That note I can only infer is he would just like us to, again, raise the FFE of the house to make sure that there would be no issues for that domicile. There are no wetlands registered DEC federal in that area.

Board Member Litten: Was the Board invited to do the walkthrough?

Ro Andres: I believe so. The Board, well excuse me, the walkthrough consisted of myself, the engineer Bill Smart and Brad from Barton and Loguidice. That was back in October.

Chairperson Hext: We did not get any notification or an invite for that.

Board Member Litten: Yeah, I think we should have.

Ro Andres: I guess as part of the review engineer being there, maybe we had thought that was sufficient.

Board Member Litten: Yeah. Okay. Well looking at these plans that we have, I'm a little confused about the notes about water coming in and test pits. There were 11 test pits dug. I think they were about on the footprint of the proposed houses. And all but three of them have got a note on it - water coming in, but only one, TP #1 in that case, was there some kind of significance attached to that. And that water was coming in at a depth of 84 inches. The others were all 90 or more. Is there some sort of a cutoff for that sort of thing?

Ro Andres: No.

Board Member Litten: So why was only one noted that's a potential problem?

Ro Andres: Those were just field findings laid out on the plans from what was seen out in the field. So there's no cutoff, there's no sort of regulation upon that. That's just field findings.

Board Member Litten: And a number of the soil samples included the note of modeling observed. How am I to interpret that? What does that mean?

Ro Andres: Modeling in soil refers to a presence of water, not necessarily groundwater. The water table was far from breached anywhere on the site. That's how you can interpret that.

Board Member Litten: Okay. So that means that there was liquid water?

Ro Andres: At some point.

Board Member Litten: Something I noticed that I didn't like was you mentioned three species of trees that you were going to plant. You were going to put in Austrian pine, Norway spruce, and sugar maple.

Ro Andres: That's right.

Board Member Litten: So we've got two European trees and one tree that's sort of on the way out in this part of the world. I would suggest that we substitute those for native trees that are climate tolerant and have some kind of high ecological value.

Ro Andres: Sure. Those trees, both coniferous and deciduous, trees were picked because of their native species to this area.

Board Member Litten: Well, that's not true for two of them.

Ro Andres: We will be, and that's part of Brad's comments here, sprucing that landscaping plan up a little.

Board Member Litten: We don't want those trees. We want better trees.

Chairperson Hext: We definitely want trees that are going to give coverage and privacy throughout the year and not just in the summer. We want some type of spruce or pine - or evergreen is a better term.

Board Member Litten: Well what I'm pushing for is they're destroying habitat and fragmenting habitat, and I'd like to see plantings that have good ecological value. We also we need more than just privacy. We also need ecological value.

Chairperson Hext: I agree with you. However, we also have to consider the neighborhood and providing some type of mitigation for them. We are going to go over each and every one of his findings. So if your questions are based on these findings, they will probably be a little redundant.

Board Member Litten: All right. So maybe I should hold off. Well, I want to make one last comment. The 2006 Village of Altamont Comprehensive Plan has the wording "established zoning and development standards that encourage use of, and remove impediments to, using solar and green buildings." As far as I know, this was never enacted by the Village; but that is in the comp plan that we have. And I'm wondering if, in developing your plans, you're giving any consideration to what they call solar-ready construction or net zero or green roofs or other kinds of climate adaptation features?

Ro Andres: As these are private lots, we have not considered that, but I'm sure it would be up to the individual owners if they were to..

Board Member Litten: But you could - there's something called solar ready, where the houses are built in such a way that they're suitable for solar installations.

Ro Andres: Okay. We'll look into that.

Board Member Litten: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have to say.

Chairperson Hext: Thank you. So anybody else before we start going through Brad's?

Board Member Ramirez: One question on WEIR, is that some kind of a small little dam in the swell? So you don't have a lot of run off?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Board Member Ramirez: Thank you.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. So do you have a copy of the Brad's questions?

Ro Andres: I do.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. So, Jeff, I'm glad you're here. As far as sidewalks and escrows for sidewalks, my thought on that is having a sidewalk would just make more impervious areas and we really don't want that. But if we could - and Allyson, this could be to you - use a sidewalk escrow or a sidewalk fund to connect other streets throughout the Village that have sidewalks and don't have sidewalks; can we use the funds that the builder is supposed to provide for a sidewalk in that general area for other areas?

Village Attorney Phillips: That's something if I could research and get back to the Board on. The Village is trying to think of a comprehensive solution to provide for ongoing improvements and expansion of its existing sidewalk network. I've actually talked with the Mayor about researching the possibility of setting up a sidewalk kind of a capital reserve account so that the Village Board can actually work to kind of bank money to help improve the sidewalk network. So tying into that to see if we have the legal authority under our existing local laws to allow for an applicant who would otherwise be required to put a sidewalk into his development, if it doesn't make sense in that particular place or there's no connecting sidewalks yet, to be able to put that into escrow to provide for the future development of the sidewalks either here or in a place that makes sense to connect the neighborhood in a better way. So I'd like to look into that a little more and report back to the Board.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Number two, applicant should submit draft maintenance agreements.

Ro Andres: In progress.

Chairperson Hext: So we will have that probably by the next meeting.

Ro Andres: Yes.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. And I don't know, Jeff, if you might know this - if the Village is interested in posting a lower speed limit on West Schoharie Plank because of the width of West Schoharie Plank? Personally, I would like to see the speed limit lowered on the Village streets to 20 anyway.

DPW Superintendent Moller: That'd be more with the police department.

Board Liaison Matulewicz: [inaudible]

Chairperson Hext: Okay. So we already confirmed the basement is not okay.

Board Member Sullivan: Wait, did we confirm that or are you confirming that you're going to raise the finished grade?

Ro Andres: We're going to raise the finished grade.

Board Member Sullivan: So the only question I had about that is, does that address Brad's concerns - raising the finished grade for lot one?

Ro Andres: It was something, and I apologize that the Board was not invited to this meeting, it was something that we had discussed out in the field. And there are two other houses here with that note - lot 10 and lot 11 will also have no basement due to the same concern.

Board Member Sullivan: But lot one will with a raised finished grade.

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. You sort of addressed the landscaping plan with the three varieties. You know, I thought it did provide for screening trees or shrubs on your existing properties. But I guess that's something that we have to dig deeper on. And Simon, if you could give some suggestions as to what you think would be appropriate plantings there, or more appropriate - you don't have to do it now.

Board Member Sullivan: Do you know if the DEC maintains a list of native species?

Board Member Litten: Well, actually the Village code has a list of species that they recommend for street trees. But that concern has a lot to do with salt. I don't think these trees are really going to be exposed to that.

Board Member Freeman: But I think the major thing we're talking about there is the privacy between the existing homes and the development behind is what we're going at, right?

Board Member Litten: That's only one consideration. We are destroying habitat and fragmenting habitat, and I think we owe something to the wildlife.

Chairperson Hext: When you say we're destroying, do you mean in the lots that are going to be cleared or just generally?

Board Member Litten: Yeah.

Chairperson Hext: How much clearing will there be?

Ro Andres: The total disturbed area for the site, that is with the newly discussed drainage swales across the site, is at 3.18 acres, and the total project site is 13.01 acres.

Board Member Litten: I appreciate you're also putting in there the area of impervious surface.

Ro Andres: It's important to us. I would like to point out as far as these comments on the new set of plans that you folks will have that the landscaping plan will be incorporated into here, and our main goal is to not disturb - to disturb as little as possible - the natural habitat here to further increase or maintain the buffer between adjacent neighbors and the new development.

Chairperson Hext: No exterior light sighting is proposed further than 40 feet from the house on the larger lots. Our code specifies that you can't have a light trespass off the property line.

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: So hopefully our code would take care of that particular issue. Project detailing for driveways able to support fire apparatus, you said you've addressed that.

Ro Andres: We've addressed that as part of the Barton and Loguidice comments here. There will be a cross section on page C140, I believe, that will show the makeup of the driveway as far as sub-base and material used so that item eight should wash out in the next round of plans.

Chairperson Hext: And I know you spoke with Paul.

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Is he up to speed on what the difference is?

Ro Andres: Yes, he is.

Chairperson Hext: Add landscaping to sheet C130.

Chairperson Hext: Sewer notes number 4 indicates a check valve in the basement while plans and detail indicate an exterior grinder pump installation. The pump typically has an integral check valve inside the pump station and use of the E-1 lateral kit comes with another check valve at the curb box. Redundant check valves help ensure pumped sewage does not enter back into the house. Can you clarify inside or outside on that one?

Ro Andres: It will be an exterior check valve and that will be addressed in the next round of provisions.

Board Member Freeman: The E-1 unit has one on it.

Ro Andres: Yeah, that's right.

Chairperson Hext: And then number two, rewording note four regarding the expansion of the work area is within project property limits by 10 feet from adjacent properties to ensure retention of existing vegetation, which I think is what you just said.

Ro Andres: That's right.

Chairperson Hext: I'm going to stop here just to see if anybody has anything that they want to ask or add to what's been said so far. (None noted.) All right. Sheet C-110 subdivision plat - Note 11 mentions driveway construction for 50,000 pound fire truck. Plans need to indicate which driveways this applies to, regardless of length.

Ro Andres: That will also be addressed in the plan and profile that Brad has requested as part of the next set of revised plans.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. What are geo-technical engineer recommendations mentioned in note four of Construction Sequence? Include in plans if pertinent.

Ro Andres: We didn't know if there would be the need for any sort of retaining wall. That's kind of a catchall that is included in plans. There are none proposed. So we will remove that.

Chairperson Hext: Did you say retaining wall?

Ro Andres: Correct. Any need for geo-technical engineering; and for this site, there is not.

Village Attorney Phillips: So that note four is going to be eliminated?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Label all proposed contours. Indicate proposed drainage swale and elevations at north and south ends adjacent to Marion Court property lines. Northerly channel needs a rear elevation to discharge.

Ro Andres: That was one of the main reasons myself, the engineer and the TDE had met on site was to discuss the potential issue of discharge from the site. We walked the northern property line here to ensure that anything built on this site would not have runoff that would directly affect neighbors on the north side. So as part of this revised plan set, we have new contour data to show that everything from this site will run towards the creek. So that note for C-130 note two, we will address that. We will label the contours to show that's what we are providing.

Chairperson Hext: Is there any proof or anything that would say whether or not the creek can handle that additional runoff? Even just today walking, that creek is flowing, and we hardly had anything.

Ro Andres: Okay.

Chairperson Hext: So if you get a rain and then spring melt, has there been any study done that that creek can handle that? I don't know if that creek's been dredged or cleaned out ever, but that's one concern I have.

Ro Andres: That's a good question.

Chairperson Hext: Last month somebody posted a picture and that was literally right up to the footbridge, and that's without additional runoff.

Ro Andres: Sure. We will look into that. As far as our design on these plans, we've indicated the flood zone which is indicative of a dotted line across the plans - the FEMA designation here. So as far as capacity for the stream, we can surely look into that. But per our design standards, that's kind of what was needed. So it's marked.

Board Member Litten: The USGS (US Geological Survey) Streamstats data for the portion of that creek downstream from the railroad tracks indicates that the impervious area of that portion of the watershed is 11%. So, if you add the amount of impervious area of I think it was 1.04 acres - something like that - in your plan, that would increase the impervious area to 11.4%. Literature suggests that impervious areas of over 10% are sort of the threshold for seeing negative impact on a stream life. So we're slightly over that minimum as this project will increase it very slightly more than that. So, it's hard to know what to make of that, but we're sort of at the level where we're seeing deleterious effects and the modeling of the stream condition index shows that creek to be degraded downstream from the railroad tracks. So we're going to degrade it a little more.

Chairperson Hext: Yes. It's just a concern. Something maybe to look into whether or not - I don't know how many new storm sewers you're proposing. Maybe there could be more along West Schoharie Plank - or if you're proposing anything there.

Village Attorney Phillips: Are there any permanent storm water management features incorporated into the subdivision design that you could go over?

Ro Andres: Yes. We have two permanent swales that the TDE had recommended: one along the houses off of Western Ave. and another in the rear of the Schoharie Plank houses. As far as structures, we have two new structures that we're proposing to alleviate any potential storm water issues along the access to the Schoharie Plank houses here. If you're looking for a quantitative report...

Village Attorney Phillips: I guess I'm just kind of thinking about Deb's question. If you've incorporated the stormwater management designs into the subdivision, is the intent to manage the stormwater so that it doesn't flow in greater quantities or velocities offsite than you know... basically, so it would mimic the natural conditions even with the addition of the impervious surface?

Ro Andres: That's our goal. Yes.

Chairperson Hext: And how are you depicting that?

Ro Andres: Well, as part of the modified SWPPP (Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan) that was initially submitted, we have gone through calculations in there to show that the disturbance here is minimal. I know there is an impact - they're new houses - but to show that it would be minimal to what you would find across the board throughout Altamont. We can certainly put a calculation together if that would help. But generally, this grading plan here is enough to show that we're considering the water quality as well as the treatment of storm runoff from the site.

Village Attorney Phillips: And just to kind of bring us back - a while ago, but in Brad's initial round of comments, he asked for this grading plan in order to confirm the applicant's representation of the amount of areas that were going to be disturbed and to see how the stormwater was going to be managed and flow on the site. So this was produced as a result of that first round of comments. And so we can certainly ask Brad maybe to provide an explanation,

maybe like a narrative form, for what it's showing and what the intent is. I think it is to provide for the management of the storm water on the site so that it's not creating an impact once it leaves the site because it's naturally going to flow according to the contours where the water would flow naturally. But the idea of the storm water management features is to manage it on site so that it's slowing it down or it's redirecting it to keep it in its natural channels.

Chairperson Hext: Yeah. Just knowing that creek and walking every day, seeing the level of water that just a minor rainstorm might produce, and then if you have winter melt, I'm just concerned that directing everything now away from Marion Court and away from Gun Club Road and all that and directing everything toward the creek could potentially be a problem. But that's why we have Brad.

Board Member Freeman: Well, the swale that you have there is going to barrier between the creek and the properties, correct?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Board Member Freeman: Okay, so that swale and then any stormwater management within those homes and everything is not going into the creek, right? Well,

Ro Andres: That's correct. It'll be captured on site.

Board Member Freeman: So what we're going to have right there is basically any residual that might - might - get past the swales - is that what I'm trying to say?

Ro Andres: That's right.

Board Member Freeman: Thank you.

Board Member Litten: We had an earlier discussion as I recall about maintenance of rain gardens that, I believe these things, I'm not sure, but I think they need to be maintained.

Chairperson Hext: Yes.

Board Member Litten: Was that your recollection of..?

Chairperson Hext: Yes. And I think that was one of the stipulations that Brad - I think it was Brad - suggested: who was going to maintain those?

Board Member Litten: Yes. So that needs to be - we had an earlier comment about making more explicit maintenance of roads and stuff. It didn't mention...

Chairperson Hext: Was that number two?

Board Member Litten: Yeah, that's right. So rain gardens needs to be included in that paragraph.

Ro Andres: We can include that.

Chairperson Hext: It's number two on the first page.

Board Member Ramirez: While on the subject of water runoff specifically to the adjacent properties, on Gun Club and Marion Court and those properties that are at the dead end, do you know the level of that property versus where you're building - are they going to be protected?

Ro Andres: This entire area here - and I'm sorry that the plans may not show that - this is wooded, this entire area here. And if you were to look at the contour levels, this house here, SBL 37.15-2-2.2 is sitting at approximately 406. We have an elevation, a low - maybe 407 on this house. The low going through this channel is lower. There would have to be a flood that would come through to affect these houses on this side coming from this property. There's very little chance that this project would negatively affect these folks that far away.

Board Member Ramirez: Thank you.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. The next page is the rain gardens. Where are the rain gardens previously discussed to receive roof drainage on each of the lots? Their storage value was intended to offset increases of impervious area from development in this sensitive area. The smallest lots could have smaller rain gardens.

Ro Andres: We can add those.

Chairperson Hext: You can add those to the plan and make it happen.

Ro Andres: Correct. And show a detail as to what is proposed for these rain gardens.

Chairperson Hext: And who's maintaining them.

Ro Andres: That's right.

Chairperson Hext: Okay.

Village Attorney Phillips: I think that was a representation made of the applicant during the SEQRA review that those would be included in the plan.

Ro Andres: We had discussed, yes, the rain gardens. The swale also we had thought maybe in lieu of rain gardens, this vegetated swale that was proposed by the TDE, would cover it. So we have no problem showing those on here as well.

Board Member Litten: What's the difference between a rain garden and a swale?

Ro Andres: Same thing.

~~Board Member Sullivan: Well, a swale is directing...~~

Ro Andres: Directing water, and the rain gardens here...

Board Member Sullivan: Catch them.

Ro Andres: It would necessarily yes, catch water from maybe a gutter system for each individual lot. Whereas the swales are capturing water from extra runoff.

Board Member Litten: So it's a matter of scale rather than structure.

Ro Andres: Yeah.

Board Member Litten: And I've read that there are specific plants that you're supposed to put in a rain garden.

Ro Andres: That's right.

Board Member Litten: Those same plants going in a swale?

Ro Andres: They could, yeah. DOT specs seasonal grass or planting that is preferred in those areas.

Board Member Freeman: I don't think you would want anything other than grass because it would plug it up.

Ro Andres: Sure.

Chairperson Hext: Willow trees - they drink a lot of water. Number four - Drainage of the property generally runs from west to east (Western towards Marion). There are no provisions for driveway culverts or consistent swales shown on the grading plans that allow runoff conveyance or avoidance or run-on drainage from one property to another except at lots 7 and 8.

Ro Andres: An item that will again be addressed with the driveway profiles. It'll show exactly where we're directing the runoff to along these driveways. That will be taken care of on C-140.

Chairperson Hext: During site walk-through provision of underground stormwater chambers were discussed near the end of swale on lot one to infiltrate some runoff. Please provide (4 sections) of 12" high PE chambers below ditch invert connected by grated vertical pipe 3" above bottom of swale.

Ro Andres: That is an item that Bill Smart and Brad have been discussing.

Chairperson Hext: Do you have any comments on that one, Jeff?

DPW Superintendent Moller: No.

Chairperson Hext: Okay.

Board Member Litten: What's a high PE chamber?

Ro Andres: That's a good question.

Chairperson Hext: So back to Bill and Brad on that, but it will be addressed.

Ro Andres: That's right.

Chairperson Hext: And it'll be addressed next month.

Ro Andres: Yes.

Village Attorney Phillips: Just a question for me. When you guys go through everything we're talking about today and all the upgrades, are you going to have a comment/response document that accompanies it so we can, for the record, note upgrades?

Ro Andres: Yes.

Village Attorney Phillips: Perfect.

Chairperson Hext: So you'll address each one and then have a comment?

Ro Andres: Yes.

Village Attorney Phillips: Okay. And just direct, like "added to sheet ____" just for ease of reference.

Ro Andres: Yeah.

Chairperson Hext: Great. And one of the reasons I'm going over each one of these tonight isn't to waste anybody's time, but to get it on record that we're reviewing every single one of his findings. Okay. Add notes to retain existing trees to provide screening and minimize area disturbance. This applies to all lots. I think you've already said that.

Ro Andres: Yes.

Chairperson Hext: Widen out discharge end of eastern swale through lots seven and eight. Contour 402 should be 20 feet wide at end on lot eight. We recommend mixing some wildflower seed mix with grass seed for this 20 x 10 foot area for providing an erosion resistant vegetated area at discharge. That's number seven. You know, my concern about a lot of this is use of vegetation. Well, that's great in the summer and spring. What happens with spring runoff or winter melting or whatever; what's being done to assure that when the grasses aren't there, things are being taken care of?

Ro Andres: Proper grading would do that.

Board Member Freeman: Well, you've still got a root system in the Spring. I mean, even though the grass is dormant or whatever, you still have a root system that's holding things together.

Ro Andres: Yes, correct.

Chairperson Hext: But if the ground is frozen,

Board Member Freeman: It's definitely not going to go anywhere. Roll right over it.

Board Member Sullivan: Can we go back to number five for a moment? The mythical high PE chambers. I assume that's some sort of containment for runoff before it gets to the swale. Do you know if there was a conversation about the benefit of those at the end? You said that they were on the northern end of the swale by lot one.

Ro Andres: That's right. There was an area, a low spot, observed on the northern end of lot one. And you can see that shown here by the contour that dips past the property line...

Board Member Sullivan: 410.

Ro Andres: And that's where that PE chamber was discussed.

Board Member Sullivan: Okay.

Board Member Ramirez: Does everybody know what a septic system is? Similar to that, only the fingers are connected together with a pipe rather than soil being there taking up space; the empty chambers that will hold water for a period of time and let it bleed out accordingly. So if you get a mad rush of water, these fingers will fill up before the rain guard or swale. Okay. Just to hold it off before it becomes...

Chairperson Hext: So that is what, Dan?

Board Member Ramirez: That 12 inch chamber, the PE, pretty much, that's the design.

Building Inspector Goss: Like a holding system.

Board Member Ramirez: Yeah.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Where are we? Anybody? I'm kind of peeling off everything here. Does anybody have anything they want to add? Gary, Jeff, Tresa, anybody? You guys can talk if you have any questions. I know it's hard, but...

Board Liaison Matulewicz: I think this might have been answered before. Sorry. And I don't recall the agreements, if that includes the rain garden agreements. So if someone buys one of these homes that has this agreement in place for this maintenance aspect and then sells it, does that stay with the house for the new owner?

Ro Andres: It would, yes.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Anybody else? Number eight: Provide screening shrubs/moderate sized trees/vegetation along driveways and houses on lots 1, 3, 4, 10, and 11 on the Western Avenue side. Provide screening with smaller species of conifers along driveways for lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 accessing West Schoharie Plank. Provide side yard trees for lot 5 to buffer new house location and add more than shown for lot 8. Screening for existing properties is important. I think we've hammer that one through.

Ro Andres: That'll be addressed on the new revised plans.

Chairperson Hext: Add a 45 degree bend at sewer manhole connection that directs discharge to outlet pipes as opposed to perpendicular to flow to reduce splatter and odors. Is that sewer as in sewage sewer?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Yeah. Okay. Is that something that has to be...

Ro Andres: That'll be revised. In the 500 series of this plan set are the details for the new structures and/or proposed connections for the sewer plan.

Chairperson Hext: Where are provisions of drainage for low area west of West Schoharie Plank driveways in connection to existing catch basin discussed during walkthrough? That's number 10.

Ro Andres: That is shown on C-130. There are two new catch basins towards West Schoharie Plank Road. Again, with these profiles that will be shown on C-140, that will show exactly where these structures are and how we plan on draining to them. That will address comment 10.

Chairperson Hext: So that'll be in C-140?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Okay.

Board Member Ramirez: Will that address the size of that catch basin?

Ro Andres: It will.

Chairperson Hext: All right. C-140 Reserved for Site Plans and Profiles: Provide detail of driveways showing crowned sub-grade, materials, depths, compaction and all needed to construct that supports a 50,000 lbs. fire truck.

Ro Andres: Will be added to the plan.

Chairperson Hext: Provide a profile of each driveway that considers drainage, culverts and conveyance of runoff. Show water and sewer laterals with appropriate cover as already detailed.

Ro Andres: Will also be added to the plans.

Chairperson Hext: Anybody? I'm going to stop for a sec. Okay. Slope is minimal across central part of property and conveyance of drainage is a challenge. Consider shallow swales leading to multiple 8-10-inch driveway culverts under driveway grades.

Ro Andres: That is an item that Bill Smart and I are working on.

Chairperson Hext: Where would that be addressed?

Ro Andres: That'll be addressed on C-140, but also C-120.

Chairperson Hext: Okay.

Board Member Litten: Is the construction of these swales and these drainages, is this going to impact the total area of disturbance?

Ro Andres: It is not. Those areas for the swales have already been accounted for. And that number, you can see the bottom of C-130.

Board Member Litten: Okay.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Consider raising finished grade of homes to allow positive drainage and reduced basement pumping of groundwater

Ro Andres: We are considering that.

Chairperson Hext: All right. Where/what is the seed mix A for detail 3?

Ro Andres: Simon, you touched on what you'd like to see. We would all like to see something that's native and would prohibit drainage there, so that will be addressed.

Board Member Sullivan: C-500. So it says what's in the seed mix. Looks like a typical blend of grasses. Oh, that's seed mix B; I don't see where it says A.

Board Member Ramirez: It's affecting lots. Four. I see lot five.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Where / what is seed mix A for detail three?

Ro Andres: That detail will be revised to show. There's a seeding chart. It's called out, but it isn't shown on that plan. So we will add that to C-500.

Chairperson Hext: For detail seven, drainage swale, we recommend one vertical, three horizontal side-slope to less erodible than one to two ratio shown.

Ro Andres: We will revise that.

Chairperson Hext: And all these will be in C-500, right?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Is there more resilient grass seed mix than just rye grass that could be more heat and erosion resistant in detail seven?

Ro Andres: I'm sure there is. We can review that.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Add sanitary sewer force main note eight in detail one regarding minimum cover. Jeff, do you have any idea what that might mean?

DPW Superintendent Moller: I think you've got minimum cover for your sanitary sewer but not the force sewer.

Village Attorney Phillips: So they're saying add to the note for sanitary sewer force main.

Ro Andres: We will revise that note.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Clarify intent of note one in detail five regarding lid 12 inches below grade.

Ro Andres: I believe that's a typo. That's not typical, but we can clarify that. We can revise that note. For C-501.

Jeff: They're usually at grade.

Ro Andres: Right at grade, correct. I think that's a table you fall into that.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. For detail two (in line flushing assembly), what is the nature of insulated lid and ability to withstand wheel loads? What is R- value to keep the piping from freezing? Dimension component depths and depths of gravel.

Ro Andres: We can also address this detail here, C-502

Chairperson Hext: By adding what he's asking for.

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Consider ball valves in lieu of gate valves. That's probably code, isn't it?

DPW Superintendent Moller: No, it's just that ball valves work a lot better.

Chairperson Hext: I'm surprised it's not code.

Board Member Freeman: Less failure.

Chairperson Hext: And you will do that?

Ro Andres: Correct.

Chairperson Hext: Okay. What is intended for cap?

Ro Andres: I'm not sure what that means.

Chairperson Hext: I'm not either.

DPW Superintendent Moller: There's no detail for your clean out cap – he probably wants detail.

Ro Andres: Oh, okay. We can add that to the plan set.

Chairperson Hext: So that's clean cap. Is that just for the sewers?

DPW Superintendent Moller: Just for the forced sewer.

Chairperson Hext: Okay.

Board Member Litten: When you say forced sewer, that's the E-1 pumps?

DPW Superintendent Moller: That's the discharge from those pumps into the sanitary sewer.

Chairperson Hext: That's Brad's comments and findings and questions. Does anybody have anything, Jeff or anyone have anything more to add that they would like to see? Simon, are you going to do a little research as to more trees that we could possibly recommend?

Board Member Litten: Sure.

Ro Andres: That'd be great. And if you wouldn't mind sharing it so we can integrate it into the next plan set.

Board Member Litten: Okay.

Ro Andres: That'd be great.

Chairperson Hext: Thank you. Anybody?

Board Member Ramirez: On the driveway off of Schoharie Plank Road, you're talking about the catch basins on the driveway. Do they overflow somewhere?

Ro Andres: They tie into the existing storm water structure that's along Schoharie Plank Road that discharges underneath Schoharie Plank Road into the creek. It was dry at the time, two weeks ago. I believe Brad had... maybe the Village was there to clean out the catch basins. But that's as it stands right now, and that's where those two structures will be tying into.

Board Member Ramirez: Okay. And that's why I was asking about the detail about the size of the basins. And then ultimately, would you consider not just those two that I see - maybe an additional two up further, kind of catch more water and contain it before it runs off because unless you do something with the creek [inaudible] or break loose.

Ro Andres: Okay. So you're saying additional structures...

Board Member Ramirez: Catch basins, yes.

Ro Andres: Along this driveway here?

Board Member Ramirez: Yes.

Ro Andres: Okay.

Chairperson Hext: I think there are three storm sewers on West Schoharie Plank now, maybe four? I think there's one on the house side, and when I was walking, I think I saw three; but I might've missed one down at the other end. I don't know. So as far as Danny's question, to add a couple more structures along there, just to disperse the water. Jeff, any idea about when was the last time those storm sewers or anything were cleaned out?

DPW Superintendent Moller: They were just cleaned out. We've got shared services with Guilderland and they came up and cleaned them out for us when we did elevations.

Ro Andres: Great. Thank you.

Chairperson Hext: How often is that done?

DPW Superintendent Moller: We try to do them once a year. Not all of them, but we rotate around the Village. It's part of a storm water plan.

Chairperson Hext: Does anybody have anything else?

Board Member Litten: Yes, I've got one request. I'm kind of a map junkie. I like maps. Would it be possible for you to send to Ginger - to the Village - shape files of your lines and areas that you're showing here?

Ro Andres: Absolutely. Sure. We can do that.

Board Member Litten: I'm sure they're pretty small files, so I'm sure you could email them.

Chairperson Hext: What are you requesting?

Board Member Litten: I'm requesting map data of the project. I've got coverages that are from the Hudson Estuary program for this area. And I'd like to see what the interfaces are between what they're doing and what these other ecological coverages are. I can make a demonstration if you want of what this stuff is, but there's an awful lot of MAP data that is available to the public - available to us - to help us understand what the ecological implications of our decisions are.

Chairperson Hext: Jeff, we're GIS mapped, right? And we're MS4 certified. Where is that information available?

DPW Superintendent Moller: In the office.

Village Attorney Phillips: I think what you're talking about is the DEC maintains many databases and they have the EAF resource mapper that you can use when looking at and reviewing an EAF, and they have a database that has different layers where they have identified wetlands that are under the jurisdiction of either federal regulatory agencies or the DEC. I think what you're talking about, it's actually kind of an enhanced database where they go above and beyond what is typically regulated.

Board Member Litten: Exactly. It's the Hudson Valley Environmental Mapper. And it has, like for example, areas that they've designated as probable and they have different levels of probability for an area being a wetland. They have a lot of wildlife data...

Village Attorney Phillips: I think it's important to understand not all of that information is verified in the field. And so it goes many times above and beyond what the DEC may consider wetland or what the federal agencies consider wetland. Or they have things like riparian buffers that are identified that don't meet any regulatory standard, but they are just kind of based on a general ecological understanding of what a typical riparian buffer could look like. But that could include many built areas in a densely populated Village like Altamont. So I just think it's important to understand that.

Board Member Litten: And they would like the communities to do an environmental resource inventory, which we haven't done. And that would put some more realism into these model things that they're looking at. But before that's done, it's the best data we have of impacts that go, as you say, beyond the strictly regulatory level.

Village Attorney Phillips: Well, arguably the best data we have is the data that we have on the ground that can be field verified...

Board Member Litten: And there's very little of that.

Village Attorney Phillips: Right. So to take the shape files of the project and kind of layer them on this, you're going to see there's existing homes all along this stretch of the creek that are

within what this database would call a riparian buffer and pretty much every area in Altamont would be the same.

Board Member Litten: Not every area.

Village Attorney Phillips: Not every area, but areas near our natural creeks and streams. So I just think it's important to note that. But still good to look at.

Ro Andres: Thank you.

Chairperson Hext: Anybody have anything else?

Board Member Sullivan: If you want, you can just nod your head and I'll transcribe it, but the details for lot five on C-130, that proposed tree line, is that like a no cut during construction or is that after the fact?

Ro Andres: Repeat that?

Board Member Sullivan: Lot 5 - it would be the southwestern property that borders Schoharie Plank Road properties - the existing tree line against the bordering properties on Schoharie Plank, is that existing or is that going to be created?

Ro Andres: That is existing, and we will not touch any of that existing tree line there. If you flip between C-100 and C-130, you'll see the existing tree line as well as what is proposed as far as the private access from Schoharie Plank Road.

Board Member Sullivan: That property seems to be the only one where the contours could potentially direct runoff into, not the homes that are raised up, but into the properties of those three properties there. So when the next set of plans has the details for the rain gardens and the swales, I think that would be particularly important.

Ro Andres: Okay.

Board Member Sullivan: And then one other question I had was in connection to Simon's comment on solar ready, the orientation of the homes on 130, is that just a placeholder or is that what you guys are proposing?

Ro Andres: Based on the existing conditions, we had thought that this was the best placement of the houses. There's a great view from these lots of the Helderbergs. You can really maximize it with this layout, but we're open for...

Board Member Sullivan: Because it seems like half of the proposed orientation is already in a north south orientation, putting half of the roof area for solar. And it would only require the possible adjustment of three of them to make them also suitable.

Ro Andres: Oh, great. Okay. Thank you.

Board Member Ramirez: Good question. There was talk about during construction we can see the access, because you'd be working from Western Avenue, around developing say lots one through five first and then working backwards. But in your notes, so that any contractor getting this here to form a bid would understand that, what's the limit of the vehicles that will be using Schoharie Plank Road even during finishing...

Chairperson Hext: Construction vehicles?

Board Member Ramirez: Yes.

Chairperson Hext: They can't - that's already part of the agreement that we have. All construction vehicles have to enter through Western Avenue. They cannot use West Schoharie Plank.

Board Member Ramirez: That includes an electrician coming in just to put in devices with a van?

Chairperson Hext: Probably not that, I think we were talking more about backhoes and...

Ro Andres: 18 wheelers. Yeah, delivery of materials. I imagine finish work would be done in vans or pickups.

Board Member Ramirez: Yeah. I just want the public to understand that those vehicles - when they see "no construction vehicles" - it's construction. They understand that those small van types, that maybe go up to like 15,000 pounds, will probably be accessing that to finish - you know, painters, electricians, trim work, maybe the kitchen cabinets, maybe not. But so that they understand - it's written - that those will be allowed or not allowed. So somewhere in your details, so that if it's being bid, not that suddenly the contractor's like, "Agh, I didn't realize I have to go through here all the time," etc., whatever it may be. No surprises.

Ro Andres: Sure.

Chairperson Hext: Yeah. Good point.

Ro Andres: We can certainly clarify that in the note.

Chairperson Hext: Anybody else before he sits down?

Ro Andres: Okay. Thank you, Board.

Chairperson Hext: Thanks, Ro. Okay. If there's nothing else, does anybody have any other business that they would like to discuss at this point? No. Okay. Review of the minutes from September 26. I didn't find anything that I needed corrected. No. Then could I have a motion to approve the minutes from September 26, 2023. Motion to approve the minutes made by Board Member Sullivan, approved by Ramirez.

Ginger: Are alternates voting tonight or is it just the regular Board because there's enough of a quorum?

Chairperson Hext: No, they can vote tonight.

Ginger: Okay.

Roll Call:

In favor: Board Members Ramirez, Freeman and Sullivan and Chairperson Hext.

Abstain: Board Member Litten (was absent at that meeting); Board Members Trout and Pinze (were not yet Board Members on that date).

Chairperson Hext: Next meeting: December 19. Could I have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Motion made by Board Member Trout, seconded by Board Member Pinze. **Roll Call: All in favor.**

Chairperson Hext: Okay. Thank you everybody. Thank you Ro. Good luck.

Respectfully submitted,


Ginger Hannah
ZBA Secretary

Attachment: Comment Letter dated 11/20/23 from Brad Grant, Village Engineer, Barton & Loguidice



November 20, 2023

Honorable Kerry Dineen, Mayor
and Board of Trustees
Village of Altamont
115 Main Street
Altamont, New York 12009

Re: CM 11 Lot Subdivision Project-comment letter

File: 895.038.001

Dear Mayor Dineen:

We have reviewed the plans submitted last week for the subject project per our scope of services and offer the following comments.

General:

1. Confirm the intentions with the ZBA for providing pedestrian accommodation's; (1) sufficient escrow for sidewalks, (2) or providing a constructed sidewalk on West Schoharie Plank Road (WSP), and a crosswalk at the west end of WSP over to an existing sidewalk as discussed during our site walk-through on September 21, 2023. We recommend the crosswalk across from the westerly end of WSP be constructed whether a sidewalk is constructed or just escrowed to enable to improve connection to sidewalk across Western Avenue as discussed during our site visit.
2. Applicant shall submit draft maintenance agreements regarding common driveway maintenance, snow removal, drainage, lawn mowing and related to the Village Attorney for review. We have made previous comments related to the initial draft agreements submitted. See below.
3. Confirm if the Village is interested in posting a lower speed limit on WSP, such as 10 MPH given its narrowness.
4. Confirm a basement is not proposed for Lot # 1 due to proximity to wetland.
5. Landscaping plan seems minimal with quantity and only three varieties. It does not provide for screening trees or shrubs near existing properties adjacent to the project on lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. See comments below.
6. Include landscaping as part of sheet C-130 title.



7. We assume no exterior site lighting is proposed farther than 40' from the house on the larger lots (over 1 acre) and any proposed lighting should go through Village building inspector for review. Comply with all Village and NYS building codes.
8. Project detailing for driveways able to support fire apparatus and drainage at driveways need additional information, see below.

Plans:

Sheet-C-001-Cover:

1. Add landscaping to sheet C130 title on cover and layout and Utilities Plan.

Sheet C-002-Notes:

1. Sewer notes number 4 indicates a check valve in the basement while plans and detail indicates an exterior grinder pump installation. The pump typically has an integral check valve inside the pump station and use of the E-1 lateral kit comes with another check valve at the curb box. Redundant check valves help ensure pumped sewage does not enter back into the houses if one fails open. Please clarify inside or exterior installation.
2. Under water notes please re-word note 4 regarding that expansion of the work area is within project property limits by 10' from adjacent property(s) to ensure retention of existing vegetation.

Sheet C-110-Subdivision Plat

1. Note 11 mentions driveway construction for 50,000 lbs. fire truck. Plans need to indicate which driveways this applies to regardless of length.

Sheet C-120-Erosion & sediment Control Plan:

1. What are Geo-technical engineer recommendations mentioned in note 4 of Construction Sequence? Include in plans if pertinent.

Sheet C-130-Landscaping, layout & Utilities Plan:

1. Label all proposed contours.
2. Indicate proposed drainage swale end elevations at north and south ends adjacent to Marion Court property lines. Northerly channel needs a weir elevation to discharge.



3. Where are the rain gardens previously discussed to receive roof drainage on each of the lots? Their storage value was intended to offset increases of impervious area from development in this sensitive area. The smallest lots could have smaller rain gardens.
4. Drainage of the property generally runs from west to east (Western towards Marion). There are no provisions for driveway culverts or consistent swales shown on the grading plans that allow runoff conveyance or avoidance or run-on drainage from one property to another except at lots 7 and 8.
5. During site walk-through provision of underground stormwater chambers were discussed near the end of swale on lot 1 to infiltrate some runoff. Please provide (4 sections) of 12" high PE chambers below ditch invert connected by grated vertical pipe 3" above bottom of swale.
6. Add notes to retain existing trees to provide screening and minimize area of disturbance. This applies to all lots.
7. Widen out discharge end of eastern swale through lots 7 and 8. Contour 402 should be 20' wide at end on lot 8. We recommend mixing some wildflower seed mix with grass seed for this 20'x10' end area for providing an erosion resistant vegetated area at discharge.
8. Provide screening shrubs/moderate sized trees/vegetation along driveways and houses on lots 1, 3, 4, 10, and 11 on the Western Ave. side. Provide screening with smaller species of conifers along driveways for lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 accessing WSP. Provide side yard trees for lots 5 to buffer new house location and add more than shown for lot 8. Screening for existing properties is important.
9. Add a 45 degree bend at sewer manhole connection that directs discharge to outlet pipe as opposed to perpendicular to flow to reduce splatter and odors.
10. Where are provisions of drainage for low area west of WSP driveways and connection to existing catch basin discussed during walk-through?

Sheet C-140-Reserved for Site Plan and Profiles:

1. Provide detail of driveways showing crowned sub-grade, materials, depths, compaction and all needed to construct that supports a 50,000 lbs. fire truck.
2. Provide a profile of each driveway that considers drainage, culverts and conveyance of runoff. Show water and sewer laterals with appropriate cover as already detailed.
3. Slope is minimal across central part of property and conveyance of drainage is a challenge. Consider shallow swales leading to multiple 8-10-inch driveway culverts under driveway grades.



4. Consider raising finished grade of homes to allow positive drainage and reduced basement pumping of groundwater.

Sheet C-500-Erosion and Sediment Control Details:

1. Where/what is seed mix A for detail 3?
2. For detail 7 (drainage swale) we recommend 1 vertical: 3 horizontal side-slope to less erodible than 1:2 shown.
3. Is there a more resilient grass seed mix than just rye grass that could be more heat and erosion resistant for detail 7?

Sheet C-501:

1. Add sanitary sewer force Main note 8 in detail 1 regarding minimum cover.
2. Clarify intent of note 1 in detail 5 regarding lid 12" below grade.

Sheet C-502:

1. For detail 2 (in-line flushing assembly) what is nature of insulated lid and ability to withstand wheel loads? What is R-value to keep the piping from freezing? Dimension component depths and depth of gravel.
2. Consider ball valves in lieu of gate valves.
3. What is intended for cap?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

BARTON & LOGUIDICE, D.P.C.

Bradley D. Grant
Senior Project Manager

BDG/bdg
-Deborah Hext-VOA ZBA via e-mail
-Allyson Phillips, Esq.
-Patty Blackwood-VOA via e-mail
-Ginger Hannah-VOA via e-mail
-Garry Goss-VOA via e-mail

Honorable Kerry Dineen, Mayor
Village of Altamont
November 20, 2023
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