

# TOWN OF GUILDERLAND

## Planning Department

Town Hall, Route 20

P.O. Box 339

Guilderland, NY 12084-0339

Phone: (518) 356-1980 x 1061

Fax: (518) 356-5514

Email: kovalchikk@togny.org



**Peter G. Barber**  
Supervisor

**Kenneth Kovalchik, AICP**  
Town Planner

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Stephen J. Feeney, Chairman  
& Planning Board

FROM: Kenneth Kovalchik, AICP, Town Planner

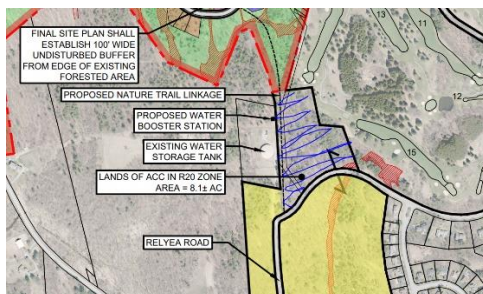
Date: February 27, 2023 (updated March 3, 2023)

SUBJ: Albany County Club – 300 Wormer Road  
**Planning Board Sketch Plan Review – Albany Country Club Country Hamlet**

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### Background

The Planning Board reviewed the sketch plan for the proposed Country Hamlet at the February 8, 2023 meeting. The Albany Country Club ("Applicant") filed a formal application for a proposed Country Hamlet development, with the Town Board accepting the application at their December 6, 2022 meeting. The Albany Country Club encompasses approximately 860 acres of land, of which 771.3 acres +/- is located in the Rural Agricultural (RA3) District and 89.4 acres +/- is located in the Single-Family Residential (R20) District. The lands located in the R20 District is the site of the former Weatherfield Phase IV Planned Unit Development (PUD), which previously permitted the development of 24 townhome units and 33 single-family lots. The PUD's Phase IV approval for the development of the townhome and single-family lots has since expired. In October 2019 the Albany Country Club requested the Town Board's approval of a withdrawal of the PUD zoning for Weatherfield Phase IV. The zoning reverted back to the original R20 zoning, which existed prior to the approval of the Weatherfield PUD in 1973. As part of the proposed Country Hamlet, the Applicant is proposing to offer the lands located within the R20 District (89.4 acres) to the Town for town park purposes, with the exception of approximately 8.1 acres located on the north side of Relyea Road as indicated in the map below (indicated by the blue cross hatched area).



A total of 254 Units are proposed within a development area consisting of approximately 192 acres, with a breakdown as follows:

- 88 single-family lots (26.9 acres)
- 116 townhome units (22.8 acres)
- 50 multi-family units (4.3 acres)

While the development envelope consists of 192 acres, approximately 121.1 acres of land within the development envelope (63% of the development site) will be deed restricted open space.

### **Open Space Summary**

The Applicant is proposing the following as proposed open space associated with the Country Hamlet application:

1. 203 acres of deed restricted open space land located between the area of the country club/golf course and Normanskill.
2. The Applicant is proposing to convey 5.4 acres of land that abuts Nott Road Park to the Town for park purposes.
3. The Applicant is proposing to convey 89.4 acres of land (former Weatherfield Phase IV) to the Town for town park purposes.
4. The Applicant is proposing to deed restrict 121.1 acres of land within the development area.

In total there would be 410.8 acres of land protected as open space, via deed restrictions or through conveyances to the town for town park purposes.

### **Additional Lands to be Conveyed to the Town**

At the February 8<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting the Board inquired about the additional lands on the east side of the Normans Kill that are part of the Albany Country Club property, and if those lands are proposed to be conveyed. The boundary of the proposed open space ended on the west side of the Normans Kill. The Albany Country Club is agreeing to convey to the town the additional lands on the east side of the Normans Kill as shown in the enclosed "Map of Additional Lands to be Conveyed to the Town".

### **Rural Guilderland: Open Space and Farmland Protection Plan**

The Albany Country Club property is located within the study area for the Rural Guilderland: Open Space and Farmland Protection Plan ("Plan"). The Plan provided a number of recommendations and strategies intended to provide the town with short- and long-term options to assist the community to implement its vision for rural Guilderland. The following recommendations/strategies from the Plan relate to and could be implemented by the proposed Albany Country Club Country Hamlet development, including but not limited to:

#### **1. Enhance the Town's Strategy to Protect Drinking Water Quality**

Recommendations included:

- Continued protection of sensitive environmental areas (floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes) through existing buffer regulations.

- Enhancement of municipal stream and watershed regulations, including larger setbacks from streams.
- Implementation of stormwater management requirements and standards.

## 2. **Protect Significant Natural Resource Areas**

Recommendations included:

- **Conservation of large tracts of woodlands.** A particular focus of these efforts should be the targeting of large, unbroken tracts of wooded areas and stream corridors.
- **Protection of scenic, wooded hills and ridges** from significant development.
- **Maintenance of wildlife habitat.**

## 3. **Utilize a Conservation Design Approach for Siting All New Types of Development**

Recommendations included:

- Protecting scenic views will help maintain important water resources, provide for usable open space and generally ensure that development considers the natural environment as the key component to site layout.

## 4. **Establish Flexible Density Standards to Respect Landowner Equity**

Recommendations included:

- In general, individual project densities are less of a concern than the overall reduction of development intensity across rural Guilderland.
- In those parts of town with sewer, water and roadway infrastructure in place, a higher level of density can be allowed as a trade-off for the provision of other public amenities such as open space, parks and other community needs.
- Projects that protect community-identified resources on the site (such as views and wildlife habitats) would be allowed a higher overall density compared with projects that did not make similar efforts.

## 5. **Enhance Human Connections to the Land**

Recommendations Included:

- Provide for enhanced **community/pedestrian connections** throughout rural Guilderland.
- Enhance **low-impact recreation** opportunities, particularly those that do not adversely impact or require significant modification to the natural environment.

## 6. **Establish Land Conservation Goals**

Recommendations included:

- Permanent protection of a portion of the town's "big woods" and/or natural areas.
- Medium term goals in the Plan indicated the protection of 500 acres of "big woods" and natural areas (cumulative acreage within rural Guilderland).

## **Planning Board Sketch Plan Review**

Pursuant to §280-14.E of Town Code an application to rezone property to a Country Hamlet District shall be reviewed in the same manner as a PUD under §280.17.E of Town Code. Pursuant

to §280-17.E.3 of Town Code the Planning Board shall review the sketch plan in accordance with §280-53.C.4 of Town Code, which requires the Board to review items such as:

**1. *Information on the type and intensity of use.***

The applicant is proposing to construct a total of 254 units within a development area consisting of approximately 192 acres, with a breakdown as follows:

- 88 single-family lots (26.9 acres)
- 116 townhome units (22.8 acres)
- 50 multi-family units (4.3 acres)

While the development envelope consists of 192 acres, approximately 121.1 acres of land within the development envelope (63% of the development site) will be deed restricted open space.

**2. *Projected traffic and noise levels.***

The applicant provided a Trip Generation and Access Assessment report prepared by Creighton Manning dated June 9, 2022. A trip generation summary for the proposed development was provided for the AM/PM Peak Hour utilizing the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) Trip Generation, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. During the AM Peak Hour the development will generate 158 trips, 43 entering the site and 115 exiting the site. During the PM Peak Hour the development will generate 194 trips, 117 entering the site and 77 exiting.

The proposed project will generate 158 new vehicle trips during the AM peak hour and 194 new vehicle trips during the PM peak hour. Traffic generated by the proposed project was distributed on Wormer Road based on existing travel patterns and probable travel routes of residents. Based on a review of the traffic volume data collected on Wormer Road, it is anticipated that approximately 45 percent of site generated traffic will travel to and from the north while the remaining 55 percent of site generated traffic will travel to and from the south. This distribution of traffic results in a maximum of 64 new vehicles on any one approach during the peak hours.

The magnitude of the new vehicle trips generated at the site is less than the NYSDOT and ITE threshold of 100 site generated vehicles on any one intersection approach for needing off-site intersection analysis. This guidance was developed as a tool to identify locations where the magnitude of traffic generated has the potential to impact operations at off-site intersections and screen out locations from requiring detailed analysis that do not reach the 100 vehicle threshold and are unlikely to require mitigation. The anticipated traffic volumes for re-development of the Albany Country Club will be below the 100-vehicle threshold indicating that additional detailed intersection analysis is not needed and that the site generated traffic will be accommodated by the existing roadway network.

At the February 8, 2023 meeting, the Planning Board recommended an intersection analysis should be completed to determine the number of vehicles traveling through the Wormer Road/Route 155 intersection and Wormer Road/Relyea Road intersection during the AM and PM Peak hours to determine if greater than 100 vehicles per hour are traveling through the intersections, which would warrant a more detailed intersection analysis.

**3. *Demands on municipal services.***

The applicant prepared an engineer's report titled "Concept for Water and Sanitary Sewer Service" dated June 2022 for the proposed Albany Country Club Country Hamlet development. Based on the report for water demand it is estimated to be 300 gallons per day (GPD) per unit for a total of 76,200 GPD water demand. The applicant is proposing to install a new booster station adjacent to the existing 2-million-gallon water storage tank on Relyea Road. The engineer's report estimates the sewage generation for the project will equal water consumption, which is 76,200 GPD. The applicant is proposing to install a new pump station with a designed pump rate of at least 500 gallons per minute, which will adequately serve the expected peak hourly flow of 429 gallons per minute.

**4. *On-site natural, historic or archaeological resources.***

The SEQR Environmental Assessment Form indicated the following environmental features are present on the site:

- 1) Federal Wetlands – All federal wetland impacts will be reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) as part of the formal site plan review. The application was referred to the ACOE as part of the SEQR coordinated review and ACOE provided no comments.
- 2) Endangered/Threatened Species (Northern Long Eared Bat) – The application was referred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the SEQR coordinated review. The USFWS requested an updated IPaC Official Species List. Per the applicant's response the updated list identified the Indiana Bat, Northern Long Eared Bat and Monarch Butterfly as potential species on or near the project. The applicant provided a report from their ecological consultant (North Country Ecological Services) which indicated no adverse effect on the species is expected by the project.
- 3) Archaeological Sites – As part of the SEQR coordinated review for the project the application was referred to the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). OPRHP commented on the existing historic home located at 301 Wormer Road related to the location of the proposed access drives to the development in relation to the historic home. OPRHP further indicated their comments do not include potential environmental impacts to NYS Parkland that may be involved in or near the project, and that such potential impacts must be considered as part of the environmental review of the project pursuant to SEQRA.

**5. *Drainage patterns.***

An engineer's report titled "Concept Stormwater Management Plan" dated June 2022 was prepared for the proposed development and included with the Country Hamlet application. The project area generally slopes in northerly and southerly directions, with a drainage divide generally occurring along Wormer Road. The drainage pattern to the north consists of numerous unnamed drainage courses flowing to the Normans Kill. Drainage flow to the south is intercepted by two drainage courses, one located along Grant Hill Road and the second between Relyea Road and the Weatherfield subdivision. Existing topography consists of a wide range of slopes ranging from steep to moderately steep and flat. The highest elevation of 460' is located south of Wormer Road on top of a prominent topographical ridge which continues from Wormer Road generally in a southerly direction. Slopes within the project area vary from generally flat to rolling within developable, upland areas, and steeper slopes descending towards drainage channels and wetlands.

Runoff generated from the project will be collected by a series of surface swales, drain inlets, catch basins, and storm sewer piping. The collected runoff will be conveyed to a postconstruction stormwater management practice for water quality treatment, runoff reduction and peak rate attenuation.

The project will require coverage under the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (GP-0-20-001) and would require preparation of a full Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). A full SWPPP will be reviewed by the Town Designated Engineer as part of the site plan review.

**6. *Surrounding community character.***

Surrounding land uses consist of the following; to the south is the Weatherfield subdivision located in a Planned Unit Development, to the west, across Grant Hill Road, are developed and undeveloped properties in the RA3 District. To the east, across the Normans Kill, is the Meadows at Mill Hill Planned Unit Development, Nott Road Town Park, Town water and sewer treatment facility, and developed and undeveloped properties in the RA3 District. To the north are Lands N/F of New York State (firing range).

**Town Designated Engineer**

At its December 6, 2022 meeting the Town Board appointed Clough Harbor Associates (CHA) as the Town Designated Engineer (TDE) for the project. The TDE will assist the Town in review of the traffic impact evaluation, stormwater, grading, utilities, environmental assessment review and overall site design. In an email dated January 18, 2023 the TDE provided preliminary comments (attached for your review) to the applicant related to traffic and indicated they would reiterate the comments in their first formal review letter.

**Planning Board Sketch Plan Report**

Pursuant to §280-53.C.4 of Town Code, the purpose of the Planning Board's sketch plan report is to make a recommendation on the property rezone to the Town Board. Based on the information included in the Country Hamlet application, information presented to the Planning Board at the February 8, 2023 meeting in which the Planning Board reviewed the sketch plan, and

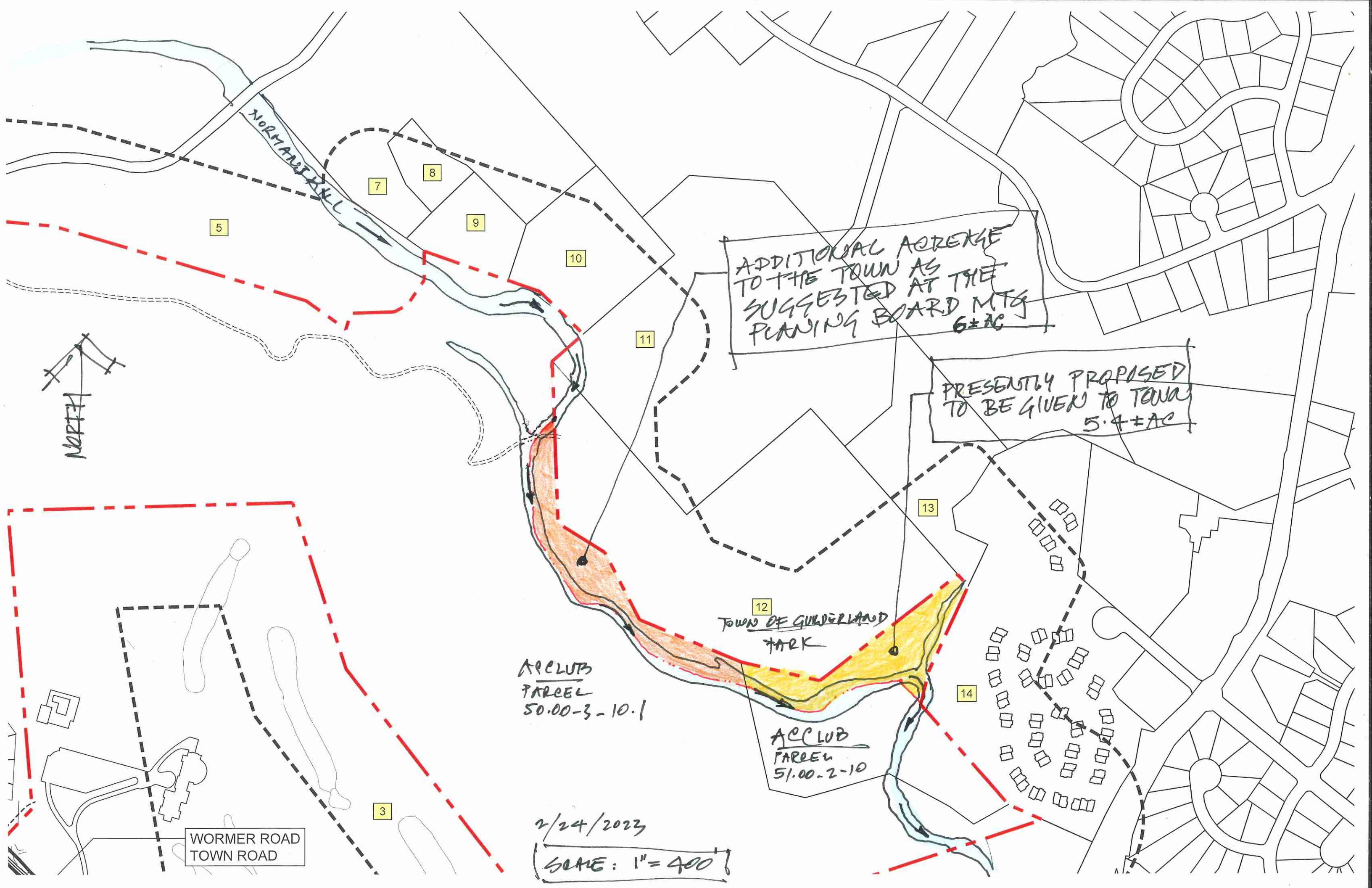
information contained in this sketch plan report, the Planning Board offers the following comments to the Town Board:

1. The proposed density of 254 units (88 single-family, 116 townhome units and 50 multi-family units) seems to be balanced with the proposed 121 acres of open space to be preserved within the development area and approximately 400 acres outside of the development area. This density should be viewed as the maximum permitted subject to detailed site plan review. The proposed building layout should also be viewed as preliminary and subject to change during site plan review.
2. Open space areas will consist of lands conveyed to the town for town park purposes and deed restricted open space. Pedestrian trails are proposed within open space areas.
3. The proposed Country Hamlet appears to be consistent with a number of goals, strategies and recommendations as listed in the Rural Guilderland: Open Space and Farmland Protection Plan.
4. Pedestrian improvements are proposed for sections of Wormer Road, from NYS Route 155, through the Country Club property to the area of the proposed development. More detailed analysis of the improvements will be reviewed as part of the formal site plan review.
5. A SEQR coordinated review has been completed with preliminary comments received from the NYSDEC, OPRHP and USFWS. Additional interested/involved agency reviews will be completed as part of the formal site plan review.
6. A TDE has been retained to assist the Planning Board and Town Board in the review of the Country Hamlet application. Preliminary comments have been prepared by the TDE and provided to the applicant.
7. While a trip generation and traffic assessment report has been prepared and considered as part of the Planning Board sketch plan review, the Board requested additional AM/PM Peak Hour intersection analysis to determine if greater than 100 vehicles are passing through any given intersection during the peak hour. This information can be completed during the Planning Board's formal site plan review. The TDE will assist the Planning Board in this review.
8. A concept Engineer's Report for sewer and water usage and stormwater management was prepared. Based on the proposed additional demands for sewer and water associated with the Country Hamlet it appears the infrastructure improvements proposed by the applicant will adequately handle the additional demands. More detailed analysis will be prepared and reviewed by the TDE/Town as part of the formal site plan review.
9. A project phasing plan should be identified for both unit build out and for completion milestones of proposed linkages to public infrastructure.
10. In addition to the proposed access points, it would be beneficial for the two adjacent local intersections, Wormer-Grant Hill & Wormer-Relyea, to be reviewed and analyzed as part of the traffic report.
11. The sketch plan identifies 9 access drives onto Wormer Road, recommend exploring a reduction to the amount of access points to what would now become a collector road.
12. The total area of wetland impact should be quantified and indicate if any mitigation areas will be required.

13. Within 5 miles of the project site are documented hibernacula of the Northern Long-Eared Bat. The main impact of concern for the bats is the cutting or removal of potential roost trees. Mitigation measures to avoid impacts should be identified.

DRAFT





NORMAN RIVER

ADDITIONAL ACRES  
TO THE TOWN AS  
SUGGESTED AT THE  
PLANNING BOARD MTG  
6±AC

PRESENTLY PROPOSED  
TO BE GIVEN TO TOWN  
5.4±AC

TOWN OF GUILDFORD  
PARK

ACCLUB  
PARCEL  
50.00-3-10.1

ACCLUB  
PARCEL  
51.00-2-10

WORMER ROAD  
TOWN ROAD

2/24/2023

SCALE: 1" = 400'



