
Fwd: RE: South Allen Development

Laura Cohen <lcohen100@gmail.com>
To: Julie Elson <jelson510@earthlink.net>
Cc: Brad Glass <glassb@ci.albany.ny.us>, MelnickD@ci.albany.ny.us
Bcc: Laura Cohen <lcohen100@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 18, 2012 at 9:09 PM

Brad,

Thanks for your questions about the possible development on 17 lots of city-owned properties on the South Allen Street wetland.

I am Laura Cohen and I live on 131 Onderdonk Avenue, parallel to the wetland. In 2005, Jeff Multare attempted to develop his 4-lot properties across the street from my house (lots 30,32,34 and 36) without either city or Army Corps permits. The ravine below Mr. Multare's property is a wetland under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps. This wetland extends south on South Allen, behind the park and across the 17 lots in question. Ultimately, both the city and the Corps stopped the development. The Corps compelled Mr. Multare to erect a siltation barrier to prevent erosion into the wetland.

It's helpful to understand that Mr. Multare's properties are at the top of the ravine above the wetland. Even so, the Corps was concerned about his encroachment onto the wetland and its environmental impact.

The 17 lots along South Allen Street targeted by Mr. Googas are immediately adjacent to and directly on the ravine and its wetland.

My current contact at the Army Corps is Roy Lofffield, 266-6360. I spoke to him last week. Mr. Lofffield has confirmed these properties as a wetland. He informed me that any development on the wetland would need to be justified to the Army Corps, the impact on the wetland would need to be minimized, damage would need to be mitigated, and any waters flowing into the wetland would need to be rerouted.

I have several concerns about the possible development on top of the wetland. I'll limit my remarks to the water issues: My end of Onderdonk Avenue is on top of a hill, with the wetland below. Despite our elevation, all our houses have sump pumps due to the high water table. There are creeks and springs associated with the wetland here, behind West Lawrence, and perhaps in other areas pending a comprehensive wetland assessment. I imagine the low-lying properties along the wetland on South Allen also have related water issues. Any development of this wetland would impact all these neighborhoods.

I have also spoken with Bill Lecuyer of Albany DGS. Bill told me that the city will not review any building permit for the wetland until the Army Corps has its say. Bill is familiar with the Army Corps and the wetland from the Multare situation.

If you wish to contact me for additional info, please feel free. I echo Julie's request to be kept in the loop about any developments. Thank you.

Laura Cohen

On Tue, Sep 18, 2012 at 2:42 PM, Julie Elson <jelson510@earthlink.net> wrote:

Thanks Brad! keep us in the loop if you hear anything. We are concerned due to the drainage issues in the area and the 2005 determination by the Army Corps of Engineers that the area under consideration and/or adjacent areas are wetlands for which special permits would be necessary for any development to occur.

----- Original Message -----

Subject:RE: South Allen Development
Date:Tue, 18 Sep 2012 18:23:38 +0000
From:Brad Glass <GlassB@ci.albany.ny.us>

To: Julie Elson <jelson510@earthlink.net>, Doug Melnick <MelnickD@ci.albany.ny.us>

Julie,

Nothing has crossed my desk, but I can't speak for the department as a whole. We do not currently have any plans or applications on file. It has come up before in conversation. I believe the proposal was for an apartment building similar in scale to those existing in the surrounding area. I have not seen detailed plans.

Bradley Glass

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From: Julie Elson [<mailto:jelson510@earthlink.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2012 11:44 AM

To: Doug Melnick; Brad Glass

Subject: South Allen Development

If you have already responded to Laura Cohen Laura Cohen <lcohen100@gmail.com>, please ignore this. Jim Sano recently alerted me, as president of the New Scotland Woodlawn Neighborhood Association to Jim Googas's plans for purchasing from the city and developing 17 lots on South Allen. Have you had conversations about this or has anything crossed your desks concerning these plans?

Julie Elson