

To: Shawangunk Journal
Letter to the Editor, March 3, 2013
RE: Shalom Lamm's Projects
Seven Peaks and Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport

As a hydrogeologic consultant for the Basha Kill Area Association, Mid-Hudson Geosciences continues to review the Seven Peaks and Commerce Park projects proposed by Mr. Shalom Lamm in the Town of Mamakating. Many residents of Sullivan, Orange, and Ulster Counties appreciate the rural natural environment of the Basha Kill and Shawangunk Ridge. As proposed, neither project shows a level of sensitivity or compatibility with the natural surroundings or the "gorgeously scenic setting" described by Mr. Lamm.

As stated in our 2009 review of the environmental impact and hydrologic reports for Seven Peaks, water supply for the 49 building lots is a serious problem. Consider that the sub-division on a ridge is an island in the sky, the only source of water comes from precipitation (rain fall and snow melt on the ridge). There is no source of groundwater flow upward under the ridge or downward from higher ground. If there is a drought, there will be no recharge of groundwater. In 2009 drilling and testing of 7 wells was reported. Another well has been drilled for which no information is provided except the location. A revised pumping test protocol proposes to test only two wells (W-3 and W-8) which are less than 500 feet apart. Given that three of the first seven wells had less than 2 gallons per minute yield (state and county minimum), testing two wells next to each other will not show sufficient water for 49 homes on 650 acres.

Commerce Park at Wurtsboro Airport is designed with about 80 percent of the land covered with impermeable surfaces (buildings and parking lots) with the remaining area predominantly floodplain, floodway and wetlands. Although Mr. Lamm referred to the project as the "confluence of Adam Smith and public policy," he has to deal with the reality that it is located at the confluence of Gumaer Brook, the former Delaware and Hudson Canal, and a large NYSDEC-regulated wetland; all draining south into the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area. Such extensive commercial development on low land is ripe for flooding as an impact of climate change.

Currently, Commerce Park is proposed as four warehouse buildings with square footage ranging from 20,000 to 1.26 million square feet. Regarding storage and transport of commercial goods in the warehousing areas, the nature of such materials is critical to the safety of the community. Due to the proximity to the airport and extensive surface water resources identified above, hazardous materials, which could spill or vaporize, will pose potential environmental impacts. Materials with the following hazardous characteristics should not be stored or transported in the warehousing operations: chemical reactivity, explosivity, corrosivity, volatility, flammability, radioactivity, oxidation potential, acidity, spillage of liquids (solvents, cleaning products, and fuels). If any such materials are involved, mitigation measures should be identified and described in a site-specific contingency plan. The public and emergency service providers have the right to know locations, quantities, and characteristics of hazardous

substances in compliance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986.

Prior to subdivision and development, each of the four water supply wells should be drilled. Pumping tests should be conducted (for 24 hours of pumping or time required by Sullivan County). During testing, in all wells drawdown and recovery water levels should be recorded during each test to observe well interference and aquifer connectivity. Although the project's water requirements are modest and a bountiful unconsolidated aquifer seems to be located beneath the site, drilling all four wells and documenting their yield in gallons per minute is prudent. If one of the wells is completed in clay or sulfur water, selecting a new well location and drilling another well will be easier before the lots are subdivided and alternative areas for wells, septic fields, and reserve fields are limited. Also proven yield (gallons per minute) for each well may be important for future use and site activities. All pumping test information shall be included in the groundwater availability report. Seasonal high and low water tables should be recorded in all wells for use in storm water design and septic design due to proximity to the former canal, brook, and wetlands.

Mother Nature is a force to be reckoned with and the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process is one method to assure that flooding or drought disasters are unlikely to occur once a project is developed. I know Mr. Lamm would like "government to keep their hands off," but in these cases, the scientific and engineering reviews are for everyone's protection.

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