

To: Guilderland Town Board

From: Guilderland Conservation Easement Review Board

Date: January 27, 2026

INSPECTION & DETAILS

Applicant(s): Kay Spence & Hannah Spence

Address: 424 Wormer Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186 (Guilderland)

Meeting Attendees:

January 12, 2026 – Applicant Kay Spence; CERB Members Cody Arana, Brigitte Fortune, Chad Hansen, Elizabeth Markham, Matthew Minniefield, Steven Sawicki, and Caitlin Ferrante Chair; Mansi Parmer, Town of Guilderland Planning Dept., and Town Supervisor Peter Barber.

Site Inspection Date: January 17, 2026

Inspected by: Applicants Kay Spence and Hannah Spence; CERB Members Cody Arana, Chad Hansen, Elizabeth Markham, Steven Sawicki, and Caitlin Ferrante, Chair.

Background: Current use of the land:

The Applicant is proposing to conserve 10 acres of a 13-acre parcel in a perpetual conservation easement. If approved, the proposed length of the conservation easement would allow the property owner to receive a 90% exemption from Town and County property taxes. In 2022, the Conservation Easement Review Board reviewed a proposed perpetual easement on a 60-acre parcel of land on Wormer Road, abutting the subject parcel to the West and North. The Town Board approved the conservation easement.

The Applicant (Kay) and her husband bought the land from the previous owner, Perry Westbrook, in 1967. Kay's husband passed in 2019 and her daughter (co-Applicant), Hannah, has the entire property in trust. The property currently includes the Applicant's house and several barns/garages. The remaining acreage is forest, open fields, and also includes a ravine with a small creek flowing at the base. At the time of the site visit, it was noted that the open fields are mowed, which the Applicant says she hires someone to do on a regular basis to control the height of the grass. In addition, there is a small pump house/shed on the property that is located over the spring that provides water to the Applicant's house. As part of the site inspection, CERB viewed the area where the pump house/shed is located. Pictures are attached to this report below.

NOTE: There are two options for the conservation easement, as proposed by the Planning Department. See the options below:

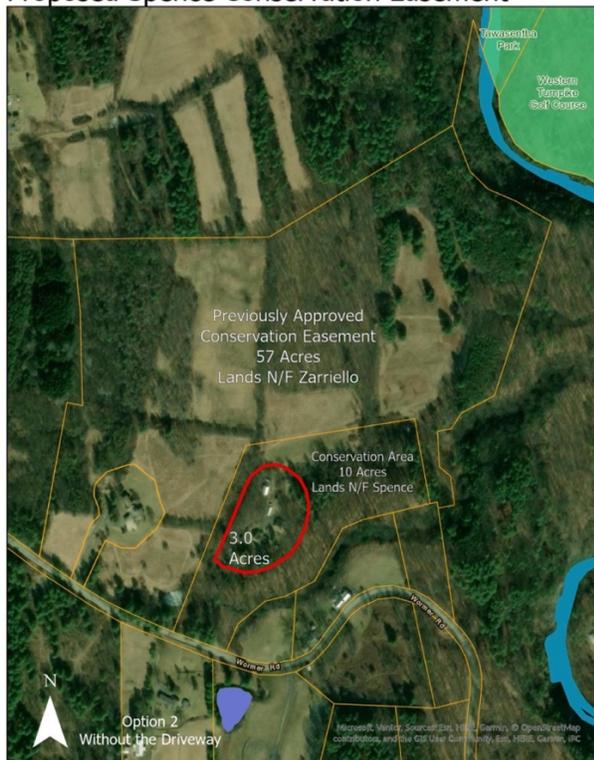
Option #1 includes the driveway in the 3 acres to be excluded from the easement:

Proposed Spence Conservation Easement



Option #2: Since the driveway serves a purpose similar to an access road for agricultural use, there is an option to exclude that specific area from the 3-acre parcel.

Proposed Spence Conservation Easement



Proposed Acres to be Conserved: 10 acres

Proposed length of easement: Perpetual (90 % exemption on assessment).

Zoning: RA3 (rural agricultural – minimum three acres)

Is the property located in an Agricultural District? No

Topography: Total property acres is 13 of which 10 are proposed for the conservation easement. A review of the contour lines on the County Interactive mapping drawing shows that the elevation of the property gradually increases from 371 AMSL (above mean sea level) where the property meets Wormer Rd in the southwestern corner, moving north and peaking at the northwestern corner at 377 feet AMSL. The rear portion (north and northeast) of the acreage descends to 281 ft. AMSL. A ravine runs along the eastern border of property, steeply dropping to 290 AMSL. Note the base, and lowest point, of the ravine is on the property neighboring this property to the east. The lowest point on 424 Wormer Rd property, regarding the descent of the ravine, is 312 AMSL at the halfway point of the eastern border. A creek/stream runs along the base of the ravine. See images looking down into the ravine from the 424 Wormer Rd property below.





Images looking down into the ravine on the eastern property line.

Vegetation/Trees: According to Applicant trees on the property include white pine, red pine, ash, and red oak. According to the Applicant, some of the trees have dropped into the ravine; approx. 50 ash trees died in 2025, and she would like to plant more. Roughly 1,000 White pine were planted at some point over the years. The property was bare in when they purchased it in 1967 (fields, etc). As confirmed by the CERB on our site visit, the property is well forested now. The CERB saw the trees listed above on our site visit, in addition to tamarac and maple trees. The Applicant has indicated that they intend to keep the property wild – no plans or interest in building on the property. Would like to keep the property undeveloped and wild.

Soil: A review of the County Interactive Mapping site shows that most of the acreage of the property has NuB, NuC and NuE soil with the northeastern-most corners of the property having small patches of HuB and soils.

Using *Soil Survey of Albany County, New York - 1992* – James H. Brown as a source document, a brief description of these soils and some of the limitations of the particular soils are as follows:

NuB - Nunda 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 18 to 24 inches from March to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and in the upper part of the subsoil and slow to very slow below. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is medium. This soil is well suited to pasture. Maintaining ground cover to reduce surface runoff helps control erosion, Restricting grazing when the soil is wet helps prevent surface compaction and destruction to pasture grasses and legumes and reduces the hazard of erosion. Proper stocking rates, rotation grazing, and yearly mowing help keep the pasture in good condition. The potential productivity of this soil for sugar maple is moderate. Sugar maple, northern red oak, and eastern white pine are common on the soil. Management limitations are slight.

NuC – Nunda silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes– This strongly sloping soil is very deep and moderately well drained. The seasonal high water table is at a depth of 18 to 24 inches from March to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and in the upper part of the subsoil and slow or very slow below. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is medium or rapid. This soil is moderately suited to most crops grown in the area. Erosion is a moderate hazard. It is moderately well suited to pasture. The potential productivity of this soil for sugar maple is moderate. Sugar maple, northern red oak, and eastern white pine are common on the soil. Management limitations are slight.

NuE – Nunda silt loam, 25 to 35 percent slopes - This steep soil is very deep and moderately well drained. The seasonal high water table in this Nunda soil is at a depth of 1 ½ to 2 feet from March to May. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. The available water capacity is high, and runoff is rapid. The main limitations of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements are the seasonal high water table and the slope. These limitations make construction operations difficult. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the slope and the frost-action potential. Coarse textured fill material will reduce frost heave. The slope makes locating roads difficult. Erosion is a severe hazard. The main limitations affecting the use of this soil as a site for septic tank absorption fields are the seasonal high water table, the slow percolation, and the slope. Other nearby soils that are less sloping are better suited to this use. Finding suitable sites and installation are difficult on this soil.

HuB – Hudson silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes – This gently sloping soil is very deep and moderately well drained. The seasonal high water table in this soil is perched above the clayey subsoil at a depth of 1 ½ to 2 feet between November and April. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderate or moderately slow in the surface and subsurface layers and slow or very slow below. The available water capacity is high. The soil is well suited as pasture or cropland. The potential productivity of this soil for northern red oak is moderately high. Northern red oak, sugar maple, eastern white pine, and white ash are common on the soil.

RhA – Rhinebeck silty clay loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes. -This nearly level soil is very deep and somewhat poorly drained. The seasonal high water table in this Rhinebeck soil is at a depth of ½ foot to 1 ½ feet. Depth to bedrock is more than 60 inches. Permeability is moderately slow in the surface and subsurface layers and slow below. The available water capacity is moderate, and runoff is slow. The county soil survey noted that most of the acreage is used as cropland, hayland, or pasture. The main limitation of this soil on sites for dwellings with basements is the seasonal high water table. Foundation drains and interceptor drains upslope from construction sites will divert runoff and help prevent wet basements. The main limitations of this soil for local roads and streets are the seasonal high water table, the low strength, and the frost-action potential. Constructing roads on raised, coarse textured fill material will reduce the frost-action potential and improve soil strength. Raising the level of fill material 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. Installing a drainage system around the absorption field and intercepting runoff from the higher areas will reduce wetness. Enlarging the absorption field or the trenches below the distribution lines will improve percolation. This soil, especially when wet, has low bearing capacity. Excavations and cutbacks will cave or slough.

Drainage/Wetlands: Due to the slope of the property, the natural drainage is west to east toward the ravine and creek which runs along the east border of the property. CERB noted that the slope is downward from the area of the residence toward the northeast and this continues downward toward the east in the direction of the Normanskill. The stream/creek at the base of the ravine feeds into the

Normanskill. According to the County Interactive Mapping site, there are no DEC nor federal wetlands on the property. There is a spring in the upper right corner of the property that provides water to the Applicant's residence.

Septic/Wells: According to Applicant, she has a septic system and her water is provided by a spring on her property. Images of the shed covering the spring are below, as seen by the CERB during the site visit:

		
<p>Shed covering the natural spring on the Applicant's property. (Site Visit)</p>	<p>A look inside the shed, covering the natural spring. (Site Visit)</p>	<p>Shed door open of the pump house. (Site Visit)</p>

Visual Impact: If a conservation easement is granted, the land will basically remain the same as it is now and will continue to be open field and forest with little to no visual impact.

Endangered Species: No endangered species were seen by the CERB at time of visit inspections but due to the nature of the property, but there could be some species which were hidden from the group as they inspected the property. According to the Applicant wild animals on the property include pine marten, deer, porcupine, rabbit, woodchuck, black bear, racoons, opossum, skunk, red fox, migratory birds, bobcat, and coyote. At the site visit, CERB saw a hawk, signs of rabbits, deer, woodpeckers, and other songbirds.



Signs of woodpeckers in dead tree. (Site Visit)



Site visit helper - Betty, the Goldendoodle

Historical Considerations: Nothing of historical significance were seen by CERB at the time of the site inspections.

What is the open space benefit of an easement being placed on this parcel of land? Granting the easement will result in conserving open space lands and help maintain the character of the Town while

providing financial incentive and assistance to the Applicant who is willing to forgo development. The acreage will remain open and undeveloped which in this case is perpetual. While doing so, the land will provide open space for migratory birds and other wildlife. CERB considers the Applicant's small shed over the spring as one of the activities allowed under the guidelines for an easement. As noted above this property is located adjacent to the property approved by the Town for a Conservation Easement in 2022 (60 acres). By adding these 10 acres to the neighboring protected lands, it creates an additional buffer for wildlife and habitat preservation. As noted above, when asked about the future plans of the property, the Applicants indicated they intend to keep it wild; no interest in building up or developing the property; want to keep it wild. When asked about public access on the proposed easement acreage, the Applicant indicated there is not currently public access or any trails on the property.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Based on the CERB review of the Application and the inspection of the property, CERB recommends that the Town consider granting the Applicant a conservation easement on the property with the exclusion of a three-acre area on which the residence is located. As noted earlier in this report, there have been several options generated regarding mapping of the easement. The option most preferred by the applicant is Option #2 (the 3 acres of the residential exclusion does not include the driveway; see image on page 2 of this report). The CERB supports this option for the Conservation Easement. Lastly, the property is currently held in a trust, overseen by the co-applicant, Hannah Spence. The CERB recommends the Town Board verify the executor's agreement to the easement. Once that is verified, it is therefore the Conservation Easement Review Board's recommendation that the Town Board consider holding a public hearing concerning the proposal prior to the Town finalizing the conservation easement agreement.



Submitted by:

Caitlin P. Ferrante - Chair
January 27, 2026