

Residents' concerns continue on Greythorne development

by ELIZABETH TAUFA
Reporter

The site of the proposed Greythorne subdivision was once again a topic of conversation at the Nov. 19 Amherst Town Board meeting.

During the public hearing, new concerns were raised regarding disrupted traffic flow as a result of the proposed development.

Brompton Road resident Denise Gagliardi pleaded with the board and with developers Marrano/Marc Equity not to build a private road that will force more traffic onto roads such as Brompton, which connect Sheridan Drive and Main Street.

"Don't block off access to Main and Sheridan," she said repeatedly during the public hearing.

Jeffery Palumbo, an attorney representing Marrano/Marc Equity, noted that an emergency exit would separate the development from the existing Ciminelli business park, but the subdivision's roads would only serve the lots and would be able to be accessed from Sheridan Drive regardless.

"We can't take traffic off

Brompton Road," he said in response to residents' concerns. "The road will only serve the subdivision, and it won't be accessed from Sheridan Drive."

Brompton Road resident Tom Giangreco was also opposed to the development's proposed gates because of the restrictions on the traffic flow between Sheridan and Main.

"People will use Brompton as a shortcut," he said. Giangreco proposed a sign banning commercial traffic and stating that the road was private and only residents should use it.

"What kind of precedent is this setting?" he asked the board.

"We can't stop anyone from putting gates up," said Supervisor Satish Mohan. "This is a private developer, and we will allow them to put up gates."

Mary Shapiro spoke out of concern for the water tower on the property.

"By changing the property, you change the view of the landmark," she said.

While the homeowner's association would be responsible for the roads in the subdivision and

not the Town of Amherst, Shapiro was also concerned with who would be responsible for the water tower as well as the public's access to it as a historical landmark.

However, not all of the public feedback was negative or looking for stipulations on the development.

"This is the highest and best use of the land, especially considering what we have there now," said Hampton Hill resident Nicholas Mecca. "If it's not built, something lesser will be built there."

Those who spoke at the hearing were also concerned about the potential for blasting in their neighborhood.

"Every precaution will be taken if blasting is necessary," said Vic Martucci, vice president of land and diversification for Marrano/Marc Equity. "The ordinance on blasting is very restrictive, so we would only use blasting as a very last resort."

The issue was tabled until the next meeting, which will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 3 at Town Hall, 5583 Main St., Williamsville.

North grad to appear on 'Good Morning America'

Brandeis University junior Jessica Kent is about to get more than her "15 minutes of fame."

As a national fellow for the Interfaith Youth Corps, the Williamsville native was recently interviewed by "Good Morning America's" Robin Roberts for a special feature that will air in mid-December on ABC. The two-part series, she says, will broadcast to a national audience of 10 million.

"'Good Morning America' was interested in our personal stories of religious grounding and transformation through involvement with community service and interfaith leadership," Kent said. In the interview, she spoke about what motivates her to serve her faith community and the greater interfaith community, how childhood experiences have shaped her involvement and what she's done to create an interfaith movement.

Kent, along with 12 other Brandeis students, recently returned from the IFYC's annual national conference in Chicago, and she was asked to join Eboo Patel, the organization's executive director, and six other IFYC students for the interview. Specifically, she says, Roberts wanted to interview people who are leading the organization and find out why they are involved.

The IFYC, founded in 1998, was only 20 people meeting in a living room, but today the group has grown into a movement involving more than 10,000 people worldwide.

"It was an experience of a lifetime to broadcast our organization's vision and accomplishments to such a large audience," Kent said. "I hope the show will catch the nation's eye and get people interested in telling their own faith story and becoming involved with interfaith initiatives from wherever they are. The national highlight is a big boost of energy for the movement. I'm eager to see it materialize in increased numbers and initiatives."

A psychology major and women and gender studies minor, Kent has been involved with interfaith work at Brandeis University since her freshman year. She joined the Religious Pluralism and Spirituality club, led a spring semester brown-bag lunch series "How Can I Find God?" and was elected the campus relation coordinator for Hillel during her sophomore year.

She is also a BUILD (Brandeis University Interfaith Leadership Development) fellow.

Brandeis, the only nonsectarian Jewish-sponsored college or university in the United States, is located near Boston.

She is a 2005 graduate of Williamsville North High School.



Sculptor Larry Griffis III created clay renderings of the tigers that will be added to Amherst High School's entrance. The final statues will be stone.

Entranceway to Amherst High getting facelift

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Renovations to the front entranceway continue at Amherst High School with proposed sculpted tigers next to each side of the front steps.

At the Nov. 20 Amherst School Board meeting, sculptor Larry Griffis III showed the board clay renderings of the tigers. Amherst's mascot is a tiger.

"To me, this is an exciting project," said Griffis. "I really enjoy working with animals, and to sculpt a tiger is something I've always wanted to do."

Upon completion, the tigers will be 6 feet high and 3 feet long. Each tiger's head will be about 3 feet tall.

Griffis said the tigers would not be made of stone but a composite material yet to be determined. Alloys and steel would support the inside. The design for each tiger is supposed to be created by Amherst High art students.

Griffis was asked by Amherst Central Alumni Foundation recording secretary Cindy Oppenheimer to take on the project. The ACAF is paying for the entire project through fundraisers.

ACAF president Ginny Fretz Rusk said they still need \$5,000 to \$7,000 to reach their goal of \$30,000 but hope to raise enough money to have the project completed by May. Rusk said alumni and friends who donate \$1,000 will have their name placed on a bronze plaque near the tiger.

Rusk said Griffis brought the clay renderings to "Go to School"

night on Oct. 4, and it was a hit.

"It was unbelievable," said Rusk. "You see pictures of it, but you can't get a feel for it until you actually see it in person. It's really tremendous. Larry has been wonderful to create a piece so that we can use it in our fundraising."

The proposed tigers project is the second project the ACAF has fundraised for the front of the high school. New oak front doors costing \$30,000 were installed last year.

Griffis, a well-known sculptor who specializes in life-size sculpting, has done work for John Carroll University, Brown University and Canisius College. He also works for many private collectors. He is also the creator of the bronze hockey player on the marquee outside HSBC Arena.

In another matter: Mark Whyte was appointed to a three-year probationary appointment as the district's new assistant superintendent - administrative services. Whyte has been with the district for 22 years. The last 11 years he has been director of administrative services in the business office.

"I'm looking forward to the new challenge," said Whyte.

Whyte, who has a valid, permanent school of business administration services certificate, said his new position will shift from business to personnel matters, like residency issues.

Whyte's previous position has already been posted.

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Jones wins Eastman opera competition

Evan Jones, a 1995 graduate of Williamsville North High School, has won the Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition held at Eastman School of Music on Nov. 17 in Rochester.

During the competition, eight students were selected from a preliminary round of 26 competitors who were judged by a panel of Eastman School voice and opera faculty. The adjudicator for the finals was Darren K. Woods, general director of the Fort Worth Opera and a frequent vocal competition judge.

For the finals, singers prepared three arias in two different languages; each sang a work of his or her choice, with the adjudicator picking the second aria. The first prize of \$1,000 is the Lynne Clarke Vocal Prize, donated by Friends of Eastman Opera founding member John Clarke in memory of his wife.

Jones is a baritone in his second year of a doctoral of music arts degree at the Eastman School of Music. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music from Florida State University and plans to pursue a career in performing and teaching upon graduating.

He is married to Sara Rose of East Amherst and is the son of Tom and Jennifer Jones of Amherst.



Jones

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