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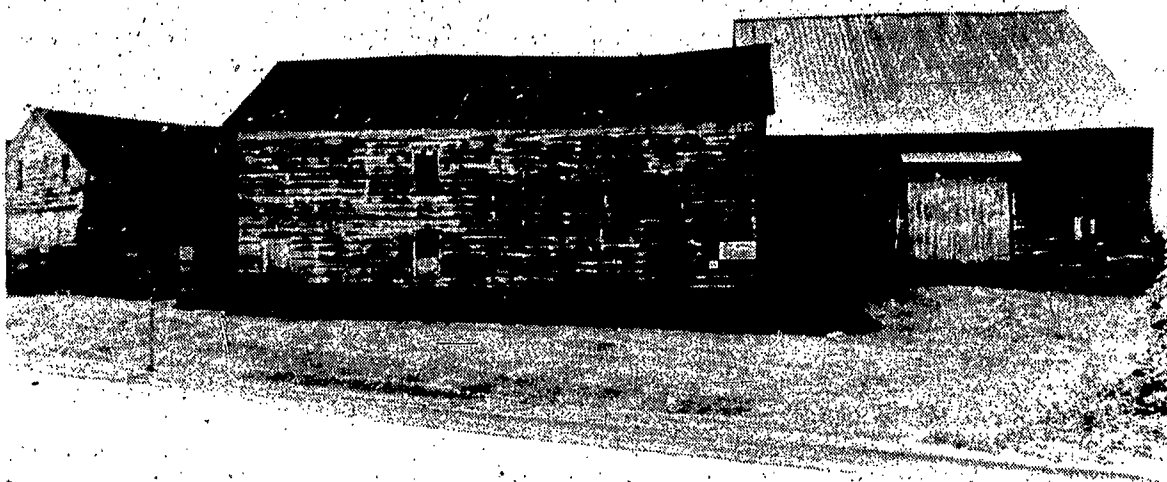
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The VanPatten Dutch Barn Complex, across Route 20 from 84 Lumber. Engineer James Besha will move the barn to the right, an authentic Dutch barn, back toward the Watervliet Reservoir for an office. He will add a Dutch barn from Stitt Road and possibly one of the other two barns in the picture to the office complex. The VanPatten barns are registered with the State Historic Preservation Office and Besha wants the Stitt Road barn added to the listing after it is moved.

Besha's office complex gets first approval from Guilderland IDA

By John Addyman
The Guilderland Industrial Development Authority last night voted unanimously to approve the issuance of \$2 million in taxable bonds to fund the construction of the Besha Associates regional office on Western Avenue. A featured part of the project will be the use of historic barns.

IDA Chairman John Smircich will now take the approval to the Town Board to see if other provisions will be offered to Besha Associates in the final package. James Besha, director of Besha Associates, will now seek a financial institution that will provide the support for the bond issue.

These taxable bonds are a way for a private company to cut a little better deal for certain kinds of development. When the IDA approves the bond, the title for the project rests with the IDA.

Besha will not have to pay the mortgage tax because a municipal entity holds title to the land. Besha will also be freed from paying sales tax on certain items used in construction.

The IDA incurs no liability, nor does the town, through a series of save-harmless agreements. So, the town is not providing the funding, but does host the pass-through legal arrangement. For this the IDA gets a fee equaling .5 percent to 1.0 percent of the total bond amount.

Besha Associates may also enjoy a break in property taxes, at least temporarily. Many municipalities, wishing to encourage this type of low-density, low-impact development, will offer a local tax incentive.

What may be proposed, if the Town Board approves, is a phase-in of Guilderland property taxes where Besha Associates would pay an increasing percentage each year until it is paying the whole amount that would normally be assessed on the property. Besha figures that will be \$15,000 - \$20,000 yearly.

Historic Barns

In this project, Besha will move one "New World Dutch" barn from the front of the property to the rear, then bring in two more barns of the same type, one from the other side of the Watervliet Reservoir, and the last from the Town of Berne. These barns date from the late 1600s to the late 1700s, and at least one is on the National Registry of Historic Buildings.

The barns will be taken apart and reassembled. The original facade will be maintained on the sides that face north, toward Western Avenue. The southern sides will have lots of glass and face the reservoir and a small pond to be dammed on the site.

Besha Associates is an engineering firm that specializes in hydroelectric plants and other water management facilities. The company has clients nationwide, and deals with vendors of specialized equipment worldwide. The barns will house 11,000 square feet of workspace for the firm's 18-20 employees.

In its application, Besha lists the costs of the project at \$736,000 for land, \$850,000 for buildings, \$200,000 for machinery and equipment, \$253,000 for utilities and roads, \$300,000 for architects' fees, \$50,000 for construction loan fees and interest, and \$100,000 for historic documentation. The bond requested has a life of 25 years.

Peace and Quiet

Besha, a former Guilderland resident, said his firm's engineers were looking for some "peace and quiet" and he has located the structures far from Rt. 20 because "the obvious consideration here is noise."

"This type of barn is rare," he said. "The VanPatten barn (On Rt. 20) is on the National Historic Register, and we want to place the other two on the register. Some significant historical events, we think, are associated with these barns."

He said the firms get visitors from around the world, and the new site "Will give people a sense of what this country is all about, historically."

Authority Member Kathy Kavanaugh asked if Besha had any plans to use the pond, perhaps to generate electricity or for experimentation. He did not. "Everyone wanted an office facing water. Our business is designing dams; we thought it would be nice to have a dam on the property. We are sensitive to the environmental needs of the reservoir; we're the engineers for it."

She also asked if Besha planned to develop it further," Besha said. He added that the possible property tax benefits were nice. "But we're not looking for anything more than anyone else would get." Smircich underlined the fact that the Town Board has not offered this kind of incentive for this kind of development.

Besha said his project could cause spinoffs because "There's a natural environment in Guilderland for doing this sort of thing."

Next meeting for the IDA, when the final package should be ready, will occur in October.

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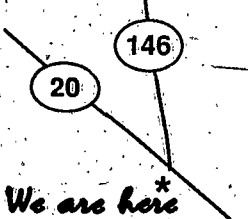
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