



Meads Hill Road Housing Project: FAQ “The Esses at Watkins Glen” Frequently Asked Questions (4/16/2025)

General Information

Why is new housing so important?

Schuyler County is losing population which is partially tied to the lack of quality housing. Additionally, as the population decreases it increases the tax burden on those living within the town because there are fewer people to share the cost of running the community. Within Schuyler County, many restaurants and businesses are not open year-round, due to a lower number of customers in the off-season. A lower population also means fewer people are available for work, making it difficult to keep existing businesses and attract new businesses and companies when we cannot promise them a ready workforce. Our school districts are also experiencing a dwindling student population and have begun combining some sports teams in order to compete with schools throughout the State.

There is a lack of quality housing and new housing is specifically needed because 41 percent of all single-family housing in the County was built before 1960. New homes are needed that do not require extensive renovation and maintenance for livability.

When was the last single-family housing project in Schuyler County built?

The last owner-occupied single-family housing project was developed in the 1970s (1975); on Fallsview Drive in Montour Falls.

Planning, Review, and Approval Processes

What is Planning Unit Development (PUD)

A planned unit development (PUD) is a large, integrated development that follows a comprehensive plan and is located on a single tract of land or on two or more tracts of land. A PUD can offer some flexibility in land planning, site design, and the protection of environmentally sensitive lands which is not possible with conventional subdivision and land development practices. The PUD is capable of mixing residential and nonresidential land uses, providing wider housing choices, and permanently preserving common open space.

What is the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)

SEQR establishes a process to systematically consider environmental factors early in the planning stages of actions that are directly undertaken, funded, or approved by local, regional, and state agencies. By incorporating environmental review early in the planning stages, projects can be modified as needed to avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

The proposed project is considered a “Type 1 Action” A Type I action is an action or class of actions that is more likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment than other actions or classes of actions. SEQR is currently being completed on the PUD Zoning District as proposed. As project design and development continue the SEQR will be modified to include proposed construction on the parcel.

What is the current zoning of the property?

The property is currently zoned Special Entertainment. The following uses are either allowed by right or permitted with a Special Use Permit (a majority of the uses require a SUP): **Residential:** Multifamily dwelling, **Commercial:** Adult Use, Livestock or crops, bar or tavern, Bed & Breakfast, Brewery & Winery, Campground, Social Club, Convenience Store, Convention Center, Cultural Facility, Day Care Center, Entertainment/Recreation: Indoor, Entertainment/Recreation: Outdoor, Arcade, Entertainment/Recreation: Outdoor Professional, Hotel/Motel, Professional Office, Restaurant, Retail Sales, Other Commercial Uses not listed. **Accessory:** Garage, Shed, Small Scale Solar; **Industrial:** Light Industrial/ Light Manufacturing, Wind: Utility Scale, Wind Measurement Towers; **Other:** Public uses, Public Utilities, Mineral Extraction.

What is the timing for this development?

The project developers are anticipating breaking ground on the project in late spring/early summer of 2024, contingent on project approvals and permitting. The project is currently awaiting approval of the PUD zoning district by the Town Board. If approved design development will begin, followed by architecture and engineering. Once the project is fully designed, it will return to the Town of Dix Planning Board for Site Plan Review and Major Subdivision Review. This review will include a public hearing.

How will this project impact the traffic on Meads Hill Road?

While the addition of this type of development will increase traffic levels on the road, it is not anticipated that it will create traffic congestion or exceed the design capacity of the road. Traffic Impact will be considered during design development and as part of the SEQR required for Site Plan/Subdivision approval.

The proposed project is located on a parcel within an agricultural district and has been used historically for agriculture, how can it be converted?

The agricultural district does not put any restrictions on how a property owner uses their land. The main goal of the Ag District program is to provide protections for current and potential agricultural lands and to encourage agriculture to continue. Property owners may build new structures on land in the agricultural district, following the same process as lands outside of the agricultural district.

What are the next steps in the process?

As of December 21, 2023

- ✓ An engineering firm has been hired to complete the site plans that the Town planning Board will review.
- ✓ The sale of the property has been completed.

What is “The Esses at Watkins Glen”?

On January 26, 2024 the project formerly referred to at the Meads Hill Road Housing Development unveiled their project name and concept via a press release. More information and details about this project can be found on their website: The Esses: <https://theesses.com/>

Infrastructure and Taxes

How will the water and sewer system be developed? Won't 50 more homes put a strain on our resources?

The water and sewer can be developed privately or publicly. If privately funded, only those homes in the specifically designed water district can use the infrastructure. If publicly funded, homeowners have the option of tying into the sewer and water during development or at a later

date. Regarding the capacity of the sewer system, the new regional wastewater reclamation plant normally runs at 50% capacity and there is an excess of over 600,000 gallons of available water.

Has Schuyler County promised funds to build a water and sewer system?

No, Schuyler County has not committed funds for water and sewer development.

What are the future benefits of this project?

The housing development will provide much-needed quality housing to allow residents to move into new housing, attract new population to fill jobs, add patrons to support our local businesses, and position our community to be on par with some of the best communities with an auto racing track. It reduces the tax burden on existing homeowners because the tax base will grow from new sales tax and new property tax (estimated at nearly \$700,000 annually) directly from the new development. This development will encourage other housing developers to consider building in Schuyler which will repopulate our communities, revitalize our schools, and lead to the year-round amenities we had decades ago.

What will happen to my property value?

Residential property is assessed based on the current market (recent sales) of similar properties (building style, construction grade, age, condition, size, etc.). For assessment purposes, your property is compared to properties like it to determine its value. A 1970s ranch with 1800 square feet is not compared to a 2-story colonial with 2800 square feet built in 2020, nor would it be compared to an old-style home built in 1910. New homes will be valued based on the cost to build and the current market for similar properties. So, unless the new construction is comparable to the existing homes in your neighborhood, the impact on existing homes would be minimal.

How will new developments in my neighborhood impact my property taxes?

New development adds to the tax base so generally, when the same tax levy amount is spread across a larger base, it has the effect of lowering the tax burden for all property owners.

Development Details

What other communities, that have an automobile race track nearby, have added permanent housing?

Projects, such as this, have been successful in other communities, including Atlanta Motorsports Park, Ga.; Thermal Club, Ca.; Monticello Motor Club, NY; and Charlotte Motor Speedway, NC.

How many homes will be built?

At the completion of the development it is anticipated that there will be 50 single-family homes each on two acres of property, additionally 10 cottages with 3-8 units each. are anticipated to be constructed.

What will the houses sell for?

Once the detailed site plan is developed, there will be a greater understanding of the number and sizes of the homes. It is our intent to build exceptional housing and amenities with an understanding that the housing market may influence the starting sales price. “

Will all 172 acres be developed for homes?

No, the current proposed plan has approximately 20 acres designated for potential hiking trails, nature trails, birding, etc.

Is there an RV park in the development?

No. While the current zoning allows for an RV park and dumping station, that is not the intended future use. There will be room for residents to store their RVs, and hook them to utilities available at the site, they are not intended to act like a “traditional RV Park or Campground”. This will also require approval from the Town of Dix Planning Board.

Will this be a gated community?

At this time, it is not proposed to be a gated community project.

Will you see the homes from the road?

At this time, the project has not begun design development, as such the exact location of each home is unknown at this time. However, it is not anticipated that the proposed houses will be visible from Meads Hill Road.

Will there be multiple garages for residents to work on their cars?

No. While many of the homes will have a traditional garage for personal use, there will be one garage intended for work on the race cars. The proposed project includes garage/storage space that is intended to be utilized primarily by residents of the community, however, there is potential that some may be rented to people who do not live within the development. In the future, there could be a small shop that could service, and prep cars associated with events at Watkins Glen International.

Your Neighbors

Who are the intended residents of the new development?

The homes will be available for anyone to purchase. This development will attract new residents to Schuyler County, many of whom are expected to live here full-time.

Will the homes be short-term rentals or permanent homes?

These are being built with the intent for them to be year-round housing. They will be homes for purchase. While some may use these homes as seasonal residences, it is intended that they will be full-time permanent residences.

Is this project being undertaken by Watkins Glen International or a group directly associated with WGI? No, the project is being undertaken by a private developer.

What is happening with The Esses?

The PUD overlay for the zoning has expired so the Zoning is back to its prior conditions

Is the Project moving forward?

The Esses are seeking alternatives and opportunities related to this site.