

T.G. MILLER, P.C.

E N G I N E E R S A N D S U R V E Y O R S

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May 26, 2026

Nathaniel Rogers
Town of Lansing
29 Auburn Road
Lansing, NY 14882

Re: Proposed Subdivision
 204 Wilson Road, Lansing, NY 14882

Dear Mr. Rogers:

We have reviewed the written comment submitted and the comments made at the May 18th, 2026 Planning Board Meeting regarding drainage and ground water in the vicinity of the proposed subdivision. At your direction, we have investigated this issue further. A site visit was conducted on May 21, 2026, by David O'Shea (T.G. Miller) and Mike Moseley (Town of Lansing Director of Public Works). We offer the following comments.

The movement of groundwater is unpredictable without performing extensive monitoring and studies. Groundwater typically seeks the path of least resistance. This path can change over time due to natural occurrences or from human interference. A disrupted and/or plugged subsurface drain could cause water to surface or change flow pattern.

Based on field observations and historical knowledge provided by the residents at 196 Conlon Road, we believe it is possible that a subsurface drain has become disrupted downhill from this location. The ditch along Conlon Road has minimal pitch and was holding water during the site visit. It is possible that when the ground becomes saturated, the water within the roadside ditch could be migrating to a nearby subsurface drain. If this drain was plugged, groundwater would find the path of least resistance. This could cause the water to "bubble up" out of the ground. This plugged drain tile most likely is also collecting additional groundwater near its vicinity.

Mike is in discussions with the Tompkins County Highway Director regarding review and possible modifications to the Conlon Road roadside ditches to see if additional pitch can be added to aid in conveying stormwater. Regardless, if the ditch is modified, it may not resolve the groundwater that is evident at 196 Conlon Road.

It is a common practice for subsurface drains to be installed in agricultural fields to drain the fields. These drains are privately owned and we are not aware of any records that depict their locations. We do not believe the Town regulates groundwater or property rights associated with water flowing from one property to another. The Town does regulate stormwater associated with land development activities. Stormwater is limited to surface water.

Proper management of surface water and groundwater are critical during construction and long term maintenance of a property. Common practices are interceptor swales, curtain drains, and french drains. These practices collect and divert water around the site. Although not preferred,

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sumps/buried basins and pumps are utilized when a site does not provide proper grade to drain the water.

Based on our review of 204 Wilson Rd, we feel proper design and construction techniques will need to be implemented to collect and convey groundwater and surface water to an established drainage way. If implemented correctly, there is not a significant potential for flooding of a home on the proposed lot. A wet or saturated yard does not constitute a flooding concern. If an existing subsurface drain is encountered during construction, the drain should be restored if possible or rerouted. If the drain is blocked, this will likely cause the water to surface at the point of least resistance along the drain line. Rerouting the drain during construction would be advantageous to the owner, as the work can likely be completed more cost-effectively as part of the proposed site development than through a separate future construction effort. Incorporating this work into the current construction phase would also minimize the need for subsequent site disturbance.

The Planning Board inquired about possible solutions or ways to prevent future drainage issues associated with ground water. This is difficult to address. As previously mentioned, subsurface drains are privately owned and the locations are unknown. Uphill properties could be utilizing private drains located on adjacent property.

Stormwater ponds are effective at collecting surface water and releasing the water at a controlled rate over a specified duration. When groundwater is routed to a pond, the pond is acting as a collection system. If the groundwater is continuous, the pond will remain full and typically will release an equal amount of water as the amount entering. The water discharging from the pond should be in an established drainage way. Installation of an appropriate collection system would provide the same hydraulic benefit as a pond.

Property owners should rely upon drainage infrastructure under their ownership or legal control to adequately collect, convey, and discharge surface water and groundwater from their properties. The implementation of such measures may be constrained by existing topography, particularly where runoff and subsurface flow naturally migrate from higher to lower elevations. In circumstances where a property lacks suitable topographic conditions or legal authority to discharge to an established drainage way, the owner should consider securing the necessary easements or other property rights to install drainage improvements and convey flow across adjacent properties, or implementation of alternative solutions such as subsurface storage systems and pumps.

Please feel free to reach out to either Dave or myself if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Donald Harner, P.E., C.P.E.S.C.



David O'Shea, P.E.