

Varna Tiny Timbers

Town of Dryden, New York
Date: 07-18-2016



Project Description

The Varna Tiny Timber project will be a single family subdivision development on a 2.37 acre plot along Dryden Road. The project will add fifteen (15) homes clustered around landscaped grounds and a central parking area. Site amenities will include 2 gazebos, loading area, landscaped walkways and open space fronting on Cornell natural areas.

Existing Conditions

The site is currently vacant with temporary stockpiling of materials unrelated to the proposed project. The piles of stockpiled materials will be removed to return the site to a level building pad as part of the construction of this project.

Program

The Varna Hamlet Mixed-Use zone allows up to 8 dwelling units per acre. With 2.37 acres the project could have as many as 18 single family homes. However, due to site constraints and a desire for more common open space the applicant is proposing 15 single family homes.

Twenty (20) paved parking spaces will be provided with one space designated for each home and 5 spaces available for visitors.

Home Design

The homes planned for this new cottage community are specially designed with an innovative timber frame shell made from locally harvested hemlock wood. The homes are available in varying sizes ranging from about 600sf to 1300sf on lots that range from 2000sf to 6000sf. The homes will be designed to appeal to individuals, couples, young families or empty nesters looking for a close-knit and environmental friendly community. With the various sizes of homes and lots there will be a variety of price points available to create a healthy mixed-income development. More information about the proposed homes including photos of the prototype can be found at www.tinytimber.house.

Stormwater

Special attention will be paid to filtering stormwater runoff from buildings and the parking area. Landscaped areas between buildings will utilize rain gardens and bioswales where practical to allow roof drainage to infiltrate the subgrade. Other runoff, primarily from the parking area, will be directed to catch basins and/or intercepted by a vegetative swale for pre-treatment and an infiltration basin. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is being developed by a professional Civil Engineer and will be made available to Town staff when completed.

Landscape

A planting plan is being developed to address the street edge and common space between buildings, such that these spaces are a lush experience with interest throughout the seasons. All plantings will be selected to be naturally drought tolerant with no irrigation installed, and manual watering only required during the period of initial plant establishment. Strong consideration will be given for native and edible plants. Shade trees will be used along the parking area to minimize the impact of the large paved surfaces.

Evergreen screen plantings and privacy fences may be installed along the property edges that face other residential properties.

The zoning allows for 40% greenspace as defined in the ordinance (The area of a development not occupied by structures or paved areas for vehicles). The proposed project provides 70% +/- greenspace.

Site Lighting

Lighting will be installed to allow for safe pedestrian travel across the site, and provide a sense of security between buildings

and in the parking area. All light fixtures will be sharp cut off and dark-sky compliant. All porches will have resident controlled lighting at entries. No flood lights will be installed.

Utilities and Energy

The water, sewer and electricity usage will be typical of residential development in the Town of Dryden and the current systems are capable of serving the new demand. The new buildings will not use any fossil fuels, and thus not require a natural gas connection.

STREAM Collaborative has accepted the Architecture 2030 Challenge, which means every project we design begins with a conversation about how we can achieve a net zero fossil fuel usage. In the year 2016, most of our buildings are being designed to reduce the overall fossil fuel usage by at least 70% compared to a conventional building of the same type and by 2030 we aimed to have all of our buildings designed for zero carbon emissions. The primary strategy for this is to install a high performance thermal envelope well beyond the minimum energy code requirements along with high-efficiency electric air-source heat pumps which provide both heating and cooling. The applicant is exploring the use of a remote solar photovoltaic system to offset the onsite energy usage.

Traffic

The impact on automobile traffic of the 15 new units is expected to be negligible. The site is on a bus route, offering access to Cornell, Downtown and other prime destinations. TCAT's busses will be able to stop directly in front of the development (flag stop), and a sidewalk out to the road pavement will be constructed within the public right of way, and maintained by the property owner to allow for safe boarding. As such, residents are likely to make fewer than the average number of car trips.

Curbside Trash and Recycling

Each individual home will have a small shed storage for trash and recycling. Homeowners will be responsible for taking trash and recycling to the curb on scheduled pickup days.

Town Design Guidelines

The project aims to be in keeping with the Town of Dryden Design Guidelines for infill of the Varna Hamlet. The Town Design Guidelines state the following general goals:

1. Integrating new growth in a way that respects and protects existing natural and cultural resources in a reasonable manner.
2. Provide reasonable examples of appropriate design concepts for landowners who choose to subdivide their property.
3. Protect and where possible, enhance public safety along roadways.
4. Establish development patterns that are cost-effective for the town and developers while creating a land use pattern that protects and strengthens the town's natural and economic attributes.

The applicant believes the proposed project meets these general goals as well as the general guidelines for residential projects listed below:

General Residential Guidelines for Dryden

1. Ensure public health and safety.
2. Protect the scenic character of rural corridors.
3. Protect agricultural resources.
4. Design with nature.
5. Recognize neighborhood context

Furthermore, the guidelines include the following specific recommendations for Hamlet districts:

Example Hamlet Development

Setbacks should be minimized, and a common design element, such as a fence should be encouraged.