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**NEWS Page 2**

Joseph Gonzales is the Clarence Chamber of Commerce's Entrepreneur of the Year.

## Proposed Woodside Drive extension still facing backlash

by **EMILY STOLL**  
Editor

Natale Builders' proposed major subdivision, an extension of Woodside Drive, returned to the planning board last week requesting conceptual review, and despite a two-year gap since the project had been tabled, residents' concerns had not changed much. About a dozen residents of Woodside Drive and Shimerville Road spoke on concerns chiefly related to the area's rural character, traffic, drainage and wildlife.

In last Wednesday's Zoom meeting, the planning board voted to begin a coordinated review on the 14-lot subdivision, which would contain single-family homes on a proposed extension of Woodside Drive, north of Greiner Road and west of Shimerville Road, that is expected to connect to Greiner Road. Many of the lots are at least 5 acres, and the smallest is slightly less than 2 acres. Although this project was originally sent before the planning board in December 2019, developers met more resistance than expected and had asked to table the project until more work could be done.

"I want to take a step back and have an opportunity to meet with the neighbors," developer Angelo Natale

had said at the time. "I don't think I was prepared enough to address some of these concerns the way I would like as if I were a resident of this community." Since then, conservation lands were added to the perimeter of the planned development, and there are currently plans for some of the land on either side of the Greiner Road right of way to belong to a homeowners' association, which will be responsible for maintenance of planned landscape buffering at the Greiner entrance. The conservation lands provide 25 to 50 feet of buffer space and the required open space at the corner of Greiner and Shimerville roads. The road would be installed all at once, but after that, development would become market-driven as buyers choose their lots. It is unclear whether the road will become a town road or remain private, but Planning Board Chair Robert Sackett said it should be public if it connects two public roads.

The concerns of the community's rural character, traffic and drainage arose several times in public comments.

"We moved here because it was a great area with rural and suburban qualities," said James Kazmierczak of Shimerville Road. "I grew up in Lancaster, and everyone knows what Lancaster became. I don't want to see that same thing happen in Clarence for my family and future generations." Multiple commenters shared his sentiments.

On a related note, traffic was a large concern, and residents were worried that a potential traffic increase could cause unsafe conditions for neighborhood kids looking to ride bikes or explore the neighborhood. Jacqueline Midecke, moth-

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**TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY DAY** – The Clarence Public Library celebrated "Take Your Child to the Library Day" Saturday, Feb. 5, with a Valentine's Day craft and a children's character scavenger hunt. Two-year-old Lexi and her parents, Josh and Kriston Russell, pick up their craft and scavenger hunt information.

Photo by Jim Smerecak

## Rock for the Cure to raise funds for blood cancers

by **EMILY STOLL**  
Editor

Music lovers will have an opportunity to enjoy a night out for a good cause this month at the sixth annual Rock for the Cure, starting at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 26, at the Tralf Music Hall. Doors open at 7 p.m. Presented by a Clarence-based charity called the Against the Storm Foundation, the event will donate its proceeds to the foundation's mission of fighting blood cancers and improving health and quality of life for those in need.

The show will be headlined by The Kensingtons and open with the high-energy band Mom Said No. Special guests Frank Nicastro of Strictly Hip and Julie Lang will also perform. Co-hosting the evening are Matt Connors, V.P. of development at Sinatra and Company Real Estate, and local TV personality Lauren Hall.

In addition to a range of merchandise available for purchase, like posters and T-shirts, Rock for the Cure will have two special guitars up for auction this year – Chuck Marczak has donated a 1977 Gibson

Les Paul custom guitar, and Three Chord Bourbon has also donated a special guitar.

"In the past five events we've raised or donated over \$50,000 [for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society] over that period of time, so we're hoping to have a really strong year this year as well," said Kensingtons member Tom Lillis, who is also one of the event organizers and a board member for the Against the Storm Foundation.

Lillis and one of his bandmates – Joe Nicastro of Amherst (partner at Cantor, Wolff, Nicastro & Hall, LLC) – were responsible for creating the first Rock for the Cure when they put their heads together and leveraged their connections to support a cause they care about.

"Really the Rock for the Cure started when Joe and I decided ... with our musical connections, why don't we start a fundraising event tied to music?" Lillis said. The Against the Storm Foundation was formed later, when inspiration hit to release a collaborative song called "Against the Storm" with various musicians to further support LLS and the fight

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## Local retailers participate in largest annual fundraiser for hunger-relief nonprofit

Western New Yorkers can help make a difference in the lives of others simply by shopping at their local grocery store this winter season.

Food markets are once again holding their annual Check Out Hunger campaigns to support FeedMore WNY's programs and services. During Check Out Hunger, customers will be able to make a donation of \$2, \$3 or \$5 while checking out at participating stores in order to feed struggling infants, children, families, veterans and older adults throughout Western New York.

Check Out Hunger is the largest annual fundraiser for the nonprofit

organization FeedMore WNY and is critical to the hunger-relief organization as it responds to a high demand for its services.

The retailers' respective Check Out Hunger campaigns will take place as follows:

Tops Friendly Markets - Now through Saturday, Feb. 12

Wegmans Food Markets - Now until Saturday, March 12

The Market in the Square - Now through Monday, Feb. 28

Dash's Market - Sunday, Feb. 13, through Saturday, March 5

Lexington Cooperative Market - Saturday, April 23, through Saturday, May 21

President and CEO of Feedmore WNY Tara A. Ellis explained that as the pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on countless families, children and older adults, FeedMore WNY works hard to provide nutritious food and vital services to our neighbors who need them the most.

"We know that our community members face a long road ahead as they work to un-bury themselves from financial hardship. For those who were already facing food insecurity, the road to recovery will be even more challenging," said Ellis. "Programs like Check Out Hunger are so crucial to FeedMore WNY.

This incredible fundraiser enables us to continue our mission of offering dignity, hope and a brighter future to hungry Western New Yorkers. We are so grateful to our retail partners for holding their Check Out Hunger campaigns, and we encourage the Western New York community to take part in this opportunity to help feed their fellow neighbors," said Ellis.

FeedMore WNY works to alleviate hunger and assists community members of all ages throughout Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties. More information can be found at [www.feedmorewny.org/](http://www.feedmorewny.org/).

## Proposed (Continued from page one)

three and resident of Woodside Drive, said, "My concern is that we are going to be like a Wenner Road, a cut-through. And there are cars speeding down there all the time – it's just a faster way to get from Shimerville onto Sheridan, and my major concern is that that's what Woodside is going to become."

Laura Kazmierczak of Shimerville Road expressed similar thoughts: "My children, because of Shimerville being as busy as it is, use Woodside as a place for trick or treating, as a way to learn how to ride their bikes. They use that, so it's not just Woodside residents that use Woodside. It's an ideal location for the small children or the younger children that do live on Shimerville. That is another reason we chose to buy our house here."

Residents were also worried about displaced water and the proposed septic tanks. James Kazmierczak described the area for the proposed development as "our natural sponge" to absorb stormwater or other runoff and questioned ponds' locations, capacities and drainage spots, further sharing concerns that the proposed project's septic tanks may bring more liquid into the area's clay land. Patrick Fitzsimmons of Shimerville Road had similar concerns and asked where the pond between proposed lots one and two would send its runoff; Christopher Midecke of Woodside Drive wanted assurance that water management would not segue into decisions to clear cut the property. "How do we ensure that we don't lean on water management as an excuse to clear cut these properties?" he asked. He also questioned whether maintenance-access easements to the ponds would result in any clear cutting; Bobby Corrao of Natale Builders clarified that the plan does not include clear cutting from "lot line to lot line" in the subdivision.

Speaking on behalf of the project, Ken Zollitsch, of engineering firm GPI, said that water should not be an issue, in part because the site of the proposed project

is lower than Shimerville Road and because ditches toward the middle of the site dip lower than Woodside. In general, runoff on this site is expected to go to catch basins in the streets before moving to the retention basins. Water discharge into neighboring property is not allowed – instead the water is expected to go through the storm system. The detention or retention ponds will likely be wet ponds and will need to meet the state's runoff reduction requirements. The waters are also filtered in a "sediment chamber" before becoming part of the pond. In terms of septic tanks, size will depend on the house size and number of bedrooms, and septic flow is expected to stay on the lot.

In response to residents' questions about wetlands, Zollitsch commented that most of the site is not regulated wetlands and said that a private firm will send someone to look at the site and confirm wetlands, which will be verified by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Residents also questioned the displacement of local wildlife and loss of their food sources. Richard Sullivan of Shimerville Road is especially fond of the bird-song he often hears and is concerned the area may lose various woodpeckers, bluebirds and flowers that populate the space, while Christopher Budden of Woodside Drive claimed endangered species live in the area. Other residents were concerned that local wildlife may lose food sources and resort to eating things the homeowner will later need to replace. Sullivan was also sad at the potential loss of green space and added that the area is currently used by hunters going after turkeys and whitetail deer. Zollitsch responded that the state has not identified any endangered species on the property via its part of the environmental assessment form.

Additionally, Misa Yasumiishi of Shimerville Road asked for reconsideration of proposed construction hours that are expected to span from 7 a.m. to

6 p.m., and Rich Horner of Woodside Drive asked for confirmation that construction vehicles will not be running up and down the existing Woodside Drive while building the new road. Zollitsch responded that the developers were willing to place the construction entrance solely on Greiner.

Some residents also worried that the plans are already set in stone because of ads they had seen. "Natale has been advertising for this

since before COVID, so, you know, it looks like it's a done deal," Horner said. Sackett assured residents that although the coordinated review is officially beginning, the proposal is not "a done deal" and still requires input from several agencies – health departments, highway departments, the DEC and others.

Planning board member Wendy Salvati reminded the audience that, while the planning board works to mitigate possible adverse effects

and make sure developments are following the law, ultimately any vacant land in town has an owner who may decide to develop it someday. "All land in the town is zoned for some form of use, and as an exercise of private property rights, people have the right to buy land and develop it," Salvati said.

Residents can request more information about Natale Builders' development or share their thoughts by contacting the town's planning office.

## Rock for the Cure (Continued from page one)

against blood cancers. From the beginning, the pair was able to get the venue donated for the event, thanks to the Tralf Music Hall's owner, Tom Barone, and since the Tralf is scheduled for some big renovations in a few months, this year's guests get the extra treat of seeing the venue in its current state before its temporary closure.

Many people have some sort of personal link to cancer, and both Lillis and Nicastro have known people affected by leukemia. Lillis' now 31-year-old nephew, David, developed the disease at age 2, and one of Nicastro's best friends lost a sister to leukemia.

"I just saw how hard that type of disease can be on not only the person suffering from it but close family," Nicastro said. "It's a very scary disease, and it just has such an impact on the community and all the people involved in the families. Having that personal connection, Tom having his personal connection, it all seemed like a very good fit to do something great in our community." Lillis' nephew is doing well nowadays, and LLS' work made a strong impression – Lillis was so appreciative of the organization's benefits and patient and family outreach that he decided to join them. Lillis later recruited Nicastro to LLS during a Kensingtons rehearsal about seven years ago, and the rest was history.

"Ever since he first brought me on board doing that type of work we just came up with the idea of doing a rock show every year, and it's gotten bigger and bigger and bigger," Nicastro said. In the event's five prior years,

organizing the show was mostly a three-man operation by Nicastro, Lillis and Dick Shaner, another Against the Storm Foundation board member, but this year the whole board is more involved in an effort to create a bigger impact and raise more funds. Other members of the Against the Storm Foundation board of directors include Kensingtons member Jack Freedenberg, Justin and Randall Andreozzi, and Kimberly Pandey.

Ever-larger shows are the dream, but there have been a few challenges and interruptions due to the pandemic – the foundation would have liked to invite Ron Hawkins from Lowest of the Low to perform, as he had already participated in one Rock for the Cure, but the fluctuating pandemic situation pushed the idea aside for now. Regardless, the organizers have a strong lineup of performers and are aiming for this to be a strong year.

One example of the Against the Storm Foundation's work is a pediatric patient travel assistance fund, which the foundation started in partnership with LLS around a year and a half ago. The program is administered by LLS and geared toward helping WNY families of pediatric blood cancer patients with travel expenses, and soon the program's eligibility will expand to include up to age 39.

Rock for the Cure tickets can be purchased for \$20 at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com), [tralfmusichall.com](http://tralfmusichall.com), or the Tralf box office at 622 Main St., Buffalo.

To learn more about the Against the Storm Foundation, visit [againstthestorm.org](http://againstthestorm.org).

## News Briefs

The Erie County Department of Health has changed its COVID-19 information line hours to 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays in response to reduced call volume over the past few weeks. Residents can call the information line at 716-858-2929 to ask general COVID-19 questions, schedule a COVID-19 test at an Erie County site, make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, arrange to be vaccinated at home, or request assistance with NYS Excelsior Pass issues and updates. Testing and vaccine information is also updated regularly at [www.erie.gov/covid19](http://www.erie.gov/covid19) and [www.erie.gov/vax](http://www.erie.gov/vax).

E-Scrap for Camp's registration deadline for Buffalo businesses has been extended to March 31. Proceeds of this fundraiser will go to Camp Good Days, benefiting children with cancer. Businesses can visit [www.sunning.com/business/e-scrap-for-camp](http://www.sunning.com/business/e-scrap-for-camp) to register.