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January 5, 2023

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***VIA EMAIL ONLY: [ChrisK@townofcortlandt.com](mailto:ChrisK@townofcortlandt.com)***

Chris Kehoe, AICP, Director  
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Thomas A. Bianchi, Vice-Chairperson, and Members of the  
Town of Cortlandt Planning Board  
1 Heady Street  
Cortlandt Manor, New York 10567

***Re: The Gurdjieff Foundation Inc.  
1065 Quaker Bridge Road East***

Gentlemen:

As you know, this law firm represents the applicant in the above-referenced application. I was in the audience during that portion of the public hearing of the same which was held on the evening of December 6, 2022.

My client and I listened carefully to the comments made by Ms. Wells, as well as members of the Planning Board, with respect to that aspect of the application which addressed issues of public access at the site. My client and I found those comments to be informative.

In an attempt to address the concerns expressed on the issue of public access, the applicant first looked at the feasibility of constructing public walking trails on its property which would be accessed from the "Croton Aqueduct Trail". Specifically, the applicant looked at the issue of the potential existence of steep slope constraints that might affect that access.

Matthew Steinberg, the Project Planner, investigated the issue and provided a memo with findings. That memo is attached for the consideration of the Planning Board.

Mr. Steinberg's memo speaks for itself. I would refer you to it for detail. The memo concluded that the slopes, existent at the area of the proposed walking trails, pose significant difficulty to the ability to construct and maintain a stable trail tread at ground level. Those conclusions are supported by an accompanying steep slope map.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the applicant believes that there are other means by which to provide meaningful and effective access to its property for the purpose of sharing the same with its neighbors and the community which it wishes to join. The applicant proposes that the following activities take place at its site and be made as a condition of the issuance of a special permit, which would invite and involve neighbors and members of the community to join:

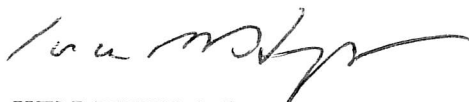
- A. Communication has been opened with the Sawmill River Audubon Society which is interested in conducting programs on the property which would be primarily bird walks and bird counts open to anyone. These activities will take place primarily in the morning; and
- B. The applicant has been in touch with the Westchester Amateur Astronomy Club which is also interested in conducting programs on the property. These would be evening programs where the club can take advantage of the darker sky and sky view that the applicant's property will offer; and
- C. The applicant proposes to host general tours of the property in number, no more than four (4) times a year, which would be limited in attendance by no more than sixty (60) people; and
- D. The applicant will offer at least once, but not more than four (4) times a year, cultural events such as classical musical concerts drawing upon artists from the applicant's foundation community and community in which it is a part; and
- E. The applicant will conduct workshops of arts and crafts as part of a 4-5 day program on a once a year basis. Registration will be open to the public. There will be a fee for the workshop and materials. Workshops may include subjects such as landscaping, painting, weaving, photography, indigenous skills and plant identification; and
- F. The applicant will take material steps to enhance the public enjoyment of the Croton Aqueduct Trail by paying for benches along the same that the State can install, if it wishes to do so.

The applicant would be pleased to have an approval of its request for a special permit be granted with the condition that a schedule and conduct of events, such as those described in this correspondence, be made a condition of the same. Obviously, in creating such a condition, there must be a balancing between the concerns which generated this correspondence and traffic concerns previously expressed. In that regard, the applicant believes that the public exercise function, as described herein, can occur within the event calendar already submitted to the Planning Board for consideration.

Mr. Steinberg will be present on the evening of January 10, 2023 and will further address the content of this letter. Karen Hagstrom will appear on behalf of this office. In the interim, I would ask that it be circulated to the Planning Board and made part of the record to be considered on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Very truly yours,

STENGER, DIAMOND & GLASS, LLP



KENNETH M. STENGER

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cc: Matthew N. Steinberg, AICP  
Michael J. Cunningham, Esq.  
The Gurdjieff Foundation, Inc.  
Brad K. Schwartz, Esq.

**MEMORANDUM**

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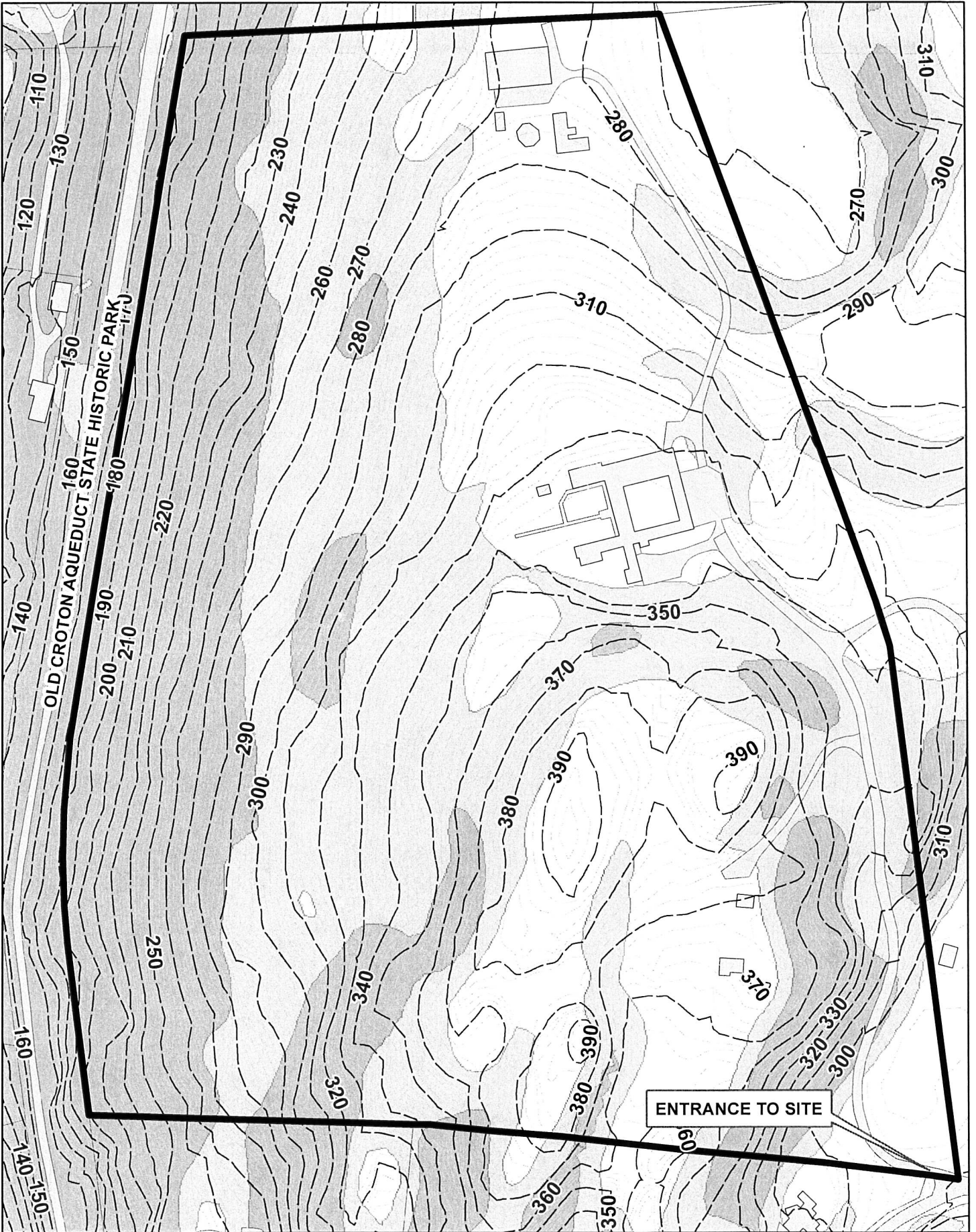
TO: Kenneth Stenger, Esq., Partner  
Stenger, Diamond & Glass, LLP  
kstenger@sdglaw.com

DATE: January 4, 2023

FROM: Matthew Steinberg, AICP

RE: 1065 Quaker Bridge  
Road East

As requested, our office evaluated the potential to create trails on the western portion of the subject property adjoining the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park (the "Old Croton Aqueduct trail"). As shown on the enclosed *Steep Slope Map*, the portion of the site immediately adjacent to the Old Croton Aqueduct trail contains slopes that exceed 25% extending between 100 feet and 200 feet into the Site. Additionally, steep slopes between 15% and 25% extend another 200 feet to 400 feet further. Constructing trails within this portion of the site is not recommended as they would require steep slope disturbances and grading to build a stable trail tread at ground level (generally 24 inches or wider) and unobstructed walking surface. A much higher level of maintenance activities would be required to prevent soil erosion and to control and/or divert stormwater runoff from exposed trail areas. Based on the US Forest Service's *Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook: 2007 Edition*, trails steeper than 20% become difficult to maintain without resorting to construction of steps or hardened surfaces and multiple switchbacks causing additional land disturbance and visual impacts. The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference recommends being extra sensitive to trail routing in vulnerable areas, including steep slopes (NY-NJ Trail Conference, *Trail Maintenance Manual*, 8.1<sup>st</sup> Edition). Given the close proximity of other properties and homes, the construction of trails could also affect these properties from inadvertent access and liability.



0 50 100 200 Feet

GIS Data: Westchester County GIS

**STEEP SLOPES**

- 15 to 25%
- Over 25%

ENTRANCE TO SITE

**STEEP SLOPE MAP**