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Letter: Carleton development would need marina, which is prohibited from Island District

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The shoreline along South Bay of Carleton Island was cleared last fall by the developer proposing to build a campground as a part of the restoration of the Carleton Villa. A nearby property owner is concerned that a marina would be built here. Contributed.

I am writing regarding the concept of a marina to service the proposed Carleton Villa campground. If developed, both the campground and the B&B/Restaurant will bring considerable traffic to South Bay of Carleton Island. The campground may host up 40-80 people daily. The B&B could host 26 people. In addition, the total building capacity is 150. With multiple seatings at the restaurant that number might be doubled. Each visitor and every employee will need transportation to and from the Villa. Each of

them will also need to leave a vehicle on the mainland, which is another serious issue for the residents and businesses in the Town to consider.

The plans show three docks in South Bay. No indication has been made as to how guests will access the island. If they are ferried, how many boats of what kind will be needed for the number of guests outlined above? What permitting is required such commercial docks? How are lights, noise, waste, and pollution in South Bay going to be managed?

If guests arrive with their own boats, the dockage would necessarily be included in the lodging rent. In the state of New York if there is dockage rental, it is a marina, which is expressly prohibited in the zoning code for the Island District.

The term “marina” means any installation which provides any accommodations or facilities for watercraft, including mooring, docking, storing, leasing, sale, or servicing of watercraft, located adjacent to waters of the state.

The developer purchased approximately 40 large dock floating docks. I am very concerned about the size and scope of what may be developed beyond what has been sketched on the plans. Evenings often find transient boaters at anchor in our quiet harbor. Daily Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, and other fishing birds are seen feeding in the bay. The island has one of the largest Heron rookeries in the region. It is also home to a bald eagle nest that hatches eaglets every year. People fish from dawn to dusk.

I am worried about the impact to the fishery in South Bay which is an important asset to residents and visitors alike. Cape Vincent identifies itself as “Home of the Gamey Black Bass” – emphasizing the importance of fishing in the lifestyle and character of the town. For a nostalgic look back at the draw of fishing in the area take a look at this article about The Hotel Carleton in the early 1900s:

<https://memoryln.net/places/united-states/new-york/cape-vincent/hotel-resort/hotel-carleton-cape-vincent-1000-islands/> A poignant quote from this article captures the local feel:

Unlike the resort villages of Clayton and Alexandria Bay, Cape Vincent was different. Instead of being noted for boat tours, night club entertainment and an almost carnival-like atmosphere, Cape Vincent played host to hard-working bass fisherman.

By contrast, this proposal heads in the opposite direction, towards the honky-tonk carnival atmosphere long eschewed by this town. Instead of the “serene” and “peaceful” environment the developer

routinely describes finding upon arrival, the proposed high-density usage threatens those very characteristics.

As a resident of South Bay, I was dismayed by the destruction that occurred there in clearing the shoreline of the Villa. Debris was left floating in the bay and dinged my prop. A beaver lodge was destroyed. In New York “No person is allowed at any time to disturb a beaver’s dam, house, or den without written permission from DEC.” It is my understanding that a permit was required but not obtained for this shoreline disturbance. I fear that the developer will proceed with unpermitted marina development in the hopes that no one will say anything. In fact, that may be a reasonable expectation as, to my knowledge, until now no one has complained about the lack of permitting for work undertaken already. I am making that complaint now to the DEC.

Furthermore, I am a swimmer and swam over 100 days in the bay last summer. (Some were VERY cold days!) When my family and friends visit and when neighbors gather, we swim and float and play around our dock in the bay. I am very concerned about our safety with such heavy traffic expected. I am also quite concerned about the impact water quality for recreation and drinking.

Additionally, the developer has stated the campground will be fenced to prevent guests from trespassing on private property. Those 40-60 guests staying on site will then be expected to find entertainment within those 6.9 acres and surrounding waterways. The plans

indicate kayaks docks which suggest watercraft will be available for rent. What types have not been specified. Perhaps jet skis or various motorboats. When this potential fleet inevitably needs repair, we can expect further impacts to water quality. If fuel and/or pump-outs are provided, how is the developer to be held accountable for remediation of any spillage?

Finally, I also have concerns about North Bay development. The plans show an expanded beach and kayak/canoe docks. Development of each will require DEC permits. I am concerned that the developer will again disregard requirement.

I understand local history experts have sent letters regarding their concerns about threats to artifacts in and around North Bay, and I hope serious consideration and study are given to these questions as well as those I pose here. The Carleton Villa website uses the slogan "Giving History a New Life". It is hoped that in trying to bring one facet of local history back to life, the existing important historical artifacts are not destroyed.

In summary, it appears a marina will be part of this development. Marinas are explicitly prohibited, and no exceptions should be made to accommodate this project.,

Christine Martin

Carleton Island