

Cape Vincent Planning Board to become lead agency reviewing Carleton Villa proposal

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A Cape Vincent Zoning Board of Appeals hearing on plans for the land around the historic Carleton Villa is scheduled for Monday. Alec Johnson/Watertown Daily Times

CAPE VINCENT — The town Zoning Board of Appeals has turned over lead agency duties for the controversial Carleton Villa restoration project to the planning board.

The move was made during a meeting at the town's recreation park Monday night.

Zoning board chairman Ed Hludzinski said they decided to have the planning board become the lead agency because that status is required to do the State Environmental Quality Review, or SEQR, which he says the planning board is better equipped to do.

Town attorney James A. Burrows said passing the resolution ensures “the process really is handled properly.”

Ronald Clapp, of Palm Beach County, Florida, purchased the property in July 2022 and wants to build rental cabins and an on-site management cabin.

The main villa is designed with 13 guest rooms, and 12 cabins will be used for camping/glamping.

If cabins are full for a full season, \$300,000 could be brought in, which Clapp has said will be used to restore the historic villa.

The planning board will also be looking at the site plan.

The villa plans will now need site plan approval from the planning board before moving forward at the zoning board level.

It is unclear if the project will be brought up at the next planning board meeting on March 13.

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