

Letter: Vehement opposition to Clarleton Island development

Apr 5, 2024



The historic Carleton Villa on Carleton Island is the subject of a redevelopment proposal and of litigation in state Supreme Court. Watertown Daily Times

My husband and I have been residents on Carleton Island for 25 years. We are vehemently opposed to a Special Use Permit and Zoning Variance Permit for the Developer's proposed Glamping site plan on Carleton Island.

The Developer states that he needs this project to financially support his renovation of the Carleton Island Villa. However, after receiving some push back on the newly introduced "Glamping" project, he claims to have scaled back the Campground proposal by removing Safari Tents and reducing the number of Cabins, which will result in a 50% reduction in his total rentals. But reducing his anticipated income doesn't change the cost of managing the Glampground and ensuring the safety of the campers. Managing the campground will necessitate 24x7 personnel coverage for adequate campground supervision as well as medical and transport personnel in the event of a medical emergency requiring evacuation from the Island. And how will this be handled in the middle of the night, in dense fog, or in severe weather conditions?

Does anyone really believe that the meager profit from a seasonal campground on a remote island with no infrastructure will contribute much to fund the Villa restoration which has been estimated to cost in excess of \$20 million by reputable local contractors?

Carleton Island is currently (and has been for over 40 years) protected from commercial development by well thought-out and planned conservation and environmental easements, as well as more stringent special zoning requirements designed to protect property in the Island District.

Rezoning this property will change the pristine character of the Island and will adversely affect all tax paying property owners who have made investments on Carleton because of the environmental protections that are in place.

I am both hopeful and optimistic that the intelligent members of the Planning and Zoning Board can and will see that granting a Special Use Permit for a seasonal Campground on one of the most pristine Islands in the 1000 islands doesn't make sense from an environmental, historic or financial perspective.

A Campground on Carleton will bring more risk than reward to the Town of Cape Vincent and its taxpaying citizens.

Eileen T. Comerford

Carleton Island

“The writer is a member of Friends of Carleton Island, a group of more than 60 seasonal residents of Carleton Island who have assembled in opposition to the proposed commercialization of the head of Carleton Island.”