

Cape Vincent Planning Board hears from engineer regarding Carleton Island project

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

CAPE VINCENT — The Cape Vincent Planning Board went over the State Environmental Quality Review, SEQR, with an engineer for the controversial Carleton Villa restoration project put forth by the owner of the land, Ronald Clapp.

Kayla Kibling, a Barton & Loguidice engineer who is consulting with the town, spent more than a half hour going over part one of the SEQR Wednesday night.

There were multiple answers on the SEQR that Kibling said Barton & Loguidice felt needed clarifying or correcting, resulting in the company recommending a new Part One SEQR be submitted to the town with the modified information.

Clapp, from Florida, purchased the property in July 2022 and hopes to turn some of the area around the villa into campgrounds/glampgrounds. He has said he would use money from the campgrounds/glampgrounds to pay for the renovations on the villa.

The plans call for 13 guest rooms in the main villa and 12 cabins for camping/glamping.

During the public hearing portion, James Fitzgerald asked about wastewater and ensuring that it would not contaminate water that is underground.

Clapp's attorney Amelia McLean-Robertson submitted letters of support to the Planning Board, which she said would be added in the record.

McLean-Robertson said if the project is consistent with the zoning laws then it is consistent with the community care.

Brody Smith, who is representing the Friends of Carleton Island, disagrees and says the proposal is inconsistent with the character of the community.

“The fact that something is permitted by the zoning, doesn’t make it consistent with community character,” he said.

Smith also disagrees that the project will have landscape buffers and limit removal of existing vegetation, saying that “a ton of existing landscaping and those buffers they were talking about preserving” have been removed.

The planning board also elected to close the public hearing.

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