

Letter: Rebutting rumors posted on social media

Nov 26, 2024



A before and after photo of what TILT says is clearing out of many trees and understory on the property. Provided photo

I wish to address statements recently made by the developer intending to build a commercial campground on the head of Carleton Island.

“Deforestation” Rumor: Fact – On March 1st, counsel for TILT issued a Cease-and-Desist letter stating that the proposed campground would violate the TILT Conservation Easements protecting Carleton Island.

The developer responded by hiring heavy equipment to clear trees and undergrowth on the island. The Court then issued a Preliminary Injunction prohibiting the developer from any further work within the 100-ft. buffer zone.

In the “before picture” of the pair below, note that the pile of trees in the middle of the photo were healthy trees taken down by the developer the prior fall. At that time, an active beaver lodge was destroyed against DEC regulations. Professional foresters are assessing the extent of loss, and the court will ultimately determine the required mitigation.

“Grant of Gold” - The developer falsely claims that the town would not have been responsible for \$200,000 if the Restore NY grant had been approved. Fact: Restore NY grant guidelines say, “A municipality that is granted an award or awards shall provide a matching contribution of no less than ten percent.” And there was no agreement between the Town and the developer to shift that burden from the taxpayers to the developer.

“Phantom Agreement” - The developer claims he first heard about the Development Agreement to pay expenses incurred by the Town in early October. Fact: The town signed the agreement in early May 2024 and the agreement was discussed in detail at the September Town Board meeting. After more than 6 months since the Town signed the agreement, and a month after agreeing to fund the account, the developer sent a check for \$15,000, or approximately half the agreed upon amount of \$29,000.

“Haunted Condition” - The developer has complained that some people would rather see the Villa “decayed rather than restored” because of a complaint made to the County Code department. In fact, the complaint was a call to require the developer to bring the Villa into a state of repair so as not to endanger the public and stated: “We request that the Code Enforcement Office take immediate action pursuant to Section 107.6 of the Code and order the owner to ‘abate or cause to be abated or corrected such unsafe conditions either by repair, rehabilitation, demolition or other approved corrective action’...The Villa has deteriorated to the point where a collapse may be imminent. This structure is located adjacent to a public right-of-way that residents regularly use to travel around the island.” The letter also voiced concerns over potential injury due to lead or asbestos in the event of further collapse.

I urge the developer to fully fund the required escrow account as agreed, and to complete the investigations necessary for the town to properly consider his applications.

Christine Martin

Friends of Carleton Island