

Letter to the Editor

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What are we thinking in Cape Vincent? As a long-time property owner, I am concerned by the Town's recent decision to move forward with SEQR review for the proposed Carleton Island glamping project while the property remains tied up in active litigation.

While the environmental review is the responsibility of the applicant, the Town's choice to advance the process at this moment still signals a level of support for a project whose legality and compliance with long-standing conservation easements have not yet been resolved. That alone is troubling.

Our limited Town resources and attention should remain focused on initiatives that draw visitors *into the village* and strengthen the local community. Some efforts have been wonderful additions. The upgraded waterfront park—where many gathered to see the Tall Ship this summer—was a bright spot. French Fest and the Car Show continue to draw strong crowds and showcase what Cape Vincent does best.

At the same time, we are confronting genuine setbacks. The loss of the ferry has been a blow to the local economy. I appreciate the Town's efforts to find a replacement. Perhaps a seasonal water taxi to Kingston, paired with a local shuttle service, could serve as an interim solution to keep tourism moving.

There are many opportunities that would directly benefit the community: a bike path, improvements to fishing access, continued marina and shoreline enhancements, and events that bring people downtown—where our small businesses depend on foot traffic. It already seems challenging enough to keep a hotel viable within the village limits. Why encourage or prioritize off-shore lodging that draws visitors away from the business district?

Water-based recreation remains central to tourism in the Thousand Islands. Supporting marina upgrades, conservation efforts, fishing, and occasional boating events would provide economic benefits while protecting the scenic environment that residents and visitors value. Even something as simple as improving fish habitat near local shoals could have long-term payoff.

For now, the Town should refrain from advancing discretionary actions related to Carleton Island until the ongoing legal proceedings are fully resolved. The island is not going anywhere. The prudent approach is to focus our attention on projects that strengthen Cape Vincent's village center—without jeopardizing the fragile environment that sustains our fishing, our views, and our quality of life.

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Sincerely,

Andrew Bott