

Letter: Cape Vincent faces unprecedented decisions

By TODD G. ATKINSON, Cape Vincent

Jul 22, 2026



Metro Creative

The Town of Cape Vincent's consideration of a proposal for the development of a campground on the head of Carleton Island continues, and given the recent state court's decision to defer consideration of on-going litigation between the developer and the Thousand Islands Land Trust, the town now faces two unprecedented decisions.

The first is whether to require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The proposed location for the campground is a site of significant environmental and cultural importance, and the proposal to date has not addressed many concerns, in particular how natural habitat and cultural artifacts will be protected, how fire and safety will be addressed, and how septic for 12 cabins and the Villa will be managed. The Town has been asked to approve an incomplete plan without the preparation of an EIS. Given the number of significant concerns, the Town should decide not to do so, by issuing a positive SEQR declaration and requiring an EIS.

The second is whether to issue a Special Use Permit, as well as substantial zoning variances, within the Islands District. Town records do not evidence that a Special Use Permit has ever been considered within the Islands District, let alone approved. Doing so would be an unprecedented departure from the long-standing purpose of the Islands District zoning laws, and would sadly compromise the Islands District.

What appeals to many about the proposed development is the suggested restoration of the Wykoff Villa; sadly, this is only a fantasy. The cost of doing so is estimated to be tens of millions of dollars, and the developer has never provided a restoration plan or evidence of capability, or evidence of financial capacity. This is not about the restoration of the Villa; it's about a poorly planned campground.

The Town of Cape Vincent has several projects underway that will enhance the community. This is not one of them.

We urge our town officials to proceed responsibly and protect the Islands District.

— **Todd G. Atkinson**, Cape Vincent